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AT ATLANTIC CITY that picturesque old anachronism Bishop Manning did his best to convince the general conference of his church that it had nothing more important to do than to reaffirm the "fundamentally and definitely Catholic character" of its creed and to lament a prevalent tendency to doubt the virgin birth. The conference, however, was clearly more interested in births of another sort and it voted, forty-four to thirty-eight, for the acceptance of a resolution which indorses "the efforts now being made to secure for licensed physicians, hospitals, and medical clinics, freedom to convey such information as is in accord with the highest principles of eugenics and a more wholesome family life, wherein parenthood may be undertaken with due respect for the health of mothers and the welfare of children." The action is of first importance, and the discussion appears to have been more lively than one would have expected in so solemn a body. Bishop Matthews of New Jersey trotted forth the usual vague platitudes about "the great moral question involved" and "the moral leadership" expected of the church; Bishop Jenkins of Nevada arose to protest in the name of the boys and girls who needed "protection." But Bishop Huston of Washington was realistic: "We cannot find out the necessity for such action by looking through stained-glass windows. We must go into the streets and into the homes of the poor. We have had a lot of twaddle from celibate clergymen. The under-privileged should have access to information which others can so readily obtain." To its eternal credit the conference agreed.

PASSAGE BY THE MEXICAN SENATE of a bill requiring secular Socialist education in all the schools is the latest and most drastic step in the government's campaign against the reactionary influence of the Catholic church in Mexican affairs. Previously several of the provinces had enacted legislation restricting the number of priests within their boundaries, and several members of the clergy had been expelled for undue political activity. A number of churches have also been converted into schools or otherwise used in the interest of the public. The present measure, however, is obviously a much more fundamental attack than any which preceded it, and may well be the result of observation of the counter-offensive assumed by the church in Spain, where a parallel situation has existed since the overthrow of the monarchy. It may also be taken as indicative of a new turn to the left in Mexican political development, which may yet recapture some of the idealism of the early days of Calles. Enforcement of the new law by President-elect Cárdenas depends primarily on pressure, or lack of it, from abroad. Public sentiment in Mexico itself appears to be definitely behind the government.

ALTHOUGH CHINA is unlikely to carry out its threat to adopt a gold standard as a defense against the Administration's silver-buying program, its repeated protests to the State Department have at least served to expose the hypocrisy of those who maintained that raising the price of silver would increase the purchasing power of the East. The truth, of course, is directly the opposite. Under normal conditions India and China are among the largest consumers of silver and are consequently interested in obtaining the metal as cheaply as possible. The buying power of a country is not determined by the exchange value of its currency, but by the aggregate worth of the goods and services which it sells abroad. A decline in the exchange value of its currency is a distinct though temporary advantage to exports, because it aids their competitive position. It would be impossible, moreover, for the United States to purchase the billion-odd ounces required by recent silver legislation without a serious drain on China's silver reserves, which would have a deflationary effect on that country's domestic economy similar to that experienced by the Western world during the dizzy ascent of the price of gold. The money doctors who have been advising the Administration have prescribed one medicine for the United States and a directly opposite remedy for China, though both were suffering from the same disease. Against these misguided quacks, China, unfortunately, has no real defense: the export tax recently imposed is unlikely to have more than a temporary effect, while resort to gold is highly impracticable.

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PREMIER DOUMERGUE'S proposals for the "reform" of the French constitution may not be definitely fascist, as has been charged in some quarters, but they reflect a trend toward the concentration of authority in the hands of the executive which is one of the most characteristic features of the fascist state. To provide greater coordination in government policy, he asks that the powers of the Premier over the various departments, hitherto largely nominal, be materially strengthened. In addition, he suggests that the Premier be given the right, when confronted with a hostile vote in the Chamber of Deputies, to dissolve that body and call a new election—a device intended to reduce the notorious instability of French cabinets. It is further proposed that the responsibility for drawing up the budget—long a source of exacerbation and delay—be taken out of the hands of financial committees selected by the Chamber and intrusted directly to the Cabinet. The Deputies would be permitted to discuss revenues and expenditures, but would not be allowed to disturb the balance set up by the Minister of Finance. Other items on the program include changes in the elective system and in the control of the judiciary. The proposals are much more drastic than is commonly realized, and if adopted will fundamentally alter the machinery of the French government. While it may be argued that the new powers might be used as effectively by a left as by a right government, their enactment would greatly increase the danger of a reactionary coup in case the Socialists threatened to attain power by constitutional means.

THE DECISION OF THE NRA to abandon production control, together with the recent relinquishment of price-fixing, will—if carried into effect—remove two of the most indefensible features of the recovery program. Nothing could have been more fallacious or more dangerous than the assumption of overproduction upon which these measures were postulated. Limitation of output, whether in the industrial or agricultural sphere, must of necessity have led to a continuation of subnormal living standards. We fear, however, that the battle for economic sanity has not yet been completely won. The particular groups which have profited by the restriction of production are unlikely to relinquish their favored position without a struggle. Upon the outcome rests the fate of the entire New Deal.

BY REFUSING to consider an appeal from the decision of the Circuit Court of Appeals in the rehearing of the Levering and Garrigue case, the United States Supreme Court has in effect given final sanction to the Anti-Injunction Act of 1932. The Levering and Garrigue Company was a member of the Iron League, the only remaining group of open-shop contractors in the building trades of metropolitan New York. The company was running into constant labor troubles, principally sympathetic strikes, because of the closed-shop contracts between the other building-trades employers and the International Association of Bridge, Structural, and Ornamental Iron Workers. In 1933 the employer procured an injunction restraining the union from promoting sympathetic strikes and from persuading owners, architects, and general contractors not to patronize the plaintiff. The Circuit Court reversed the lower court on the injunction decree and this reversal was upheld by the Supreme Court. A new and amended decree against members of the union was then procured; the new injunction was again vacated by the Circuit Court; and now the Supreme Court refuses to hear the employer's appeal. The Supreme Court's act does more than sustain the constitutionality of the anti-injunction law. It implies that a controversy in which a union lines up other unions as well as closed-shop employers against a non-union, open-shop employer is a labor dispute within the meaning of the act. It implies, further, that federal courts exceed their powers when they issue injunctions against sympathetic strikes, organizational drives for the closed shop, and even, perhaps, secondary boycotts. This makes the reluctance of the Department of Justice to take a strong stand on Section 7-a all the more difficult to comprehend.

THE MORRO CASTLE INQUIRY conducted by the Department of Commerce has been concluded with charges of negligence against the master of the vessel, William F. Warms, and four of his staff officers. Captain Warms is specifically charged with having delayed the sending of SOS signals, with having failed to stop the ship soon enough after it was apparent that the superstructure was afire, and in general with having neglected the routine of fire fighting. The charges against the chief engineer, the assistant engineer, and the second and third officers are briefly that they saved their own skins without thought of the passengers. The five officers will be tried on these charges, and are threatened with permanent loss of their licenses. It was plain, even to those persons whose information about the case was limited to newspaper accounts of the hearings, that certain of the ship's officers did not conduct themselves with either the resourcefulness or the courage that the public has every right to expect. There was, however, another party in the case against whom no charges have yet been made. We refer to the Ward Line. The long hours and low wages which are the lot of the crews of these ships, the fact that one voyage is hardly more than ended before another is begun, the overwork of stewards who are on call for passengers at all hours of the night and day—all these make it not in the least surprising that in an emergency the human element, on which, no matter how up to date the equipment, the safety of passengers at sea depends, should fail. Charges of negligence may yet be made against the Ward Line. But the charge of making profits at the expense not only of its crews but of its passengers is a more serious charge which it should also be called upon to face.

THE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE on Un-American Activities could not do better than attach John L. Spivak as a special guide through the jungle of Nazi intrigue and anti-Semitic propaganda. As a Communist sympathizer Mr. Spivak might decline to serve, especially since the committee has declared its intention of searching for un-American feathers in the left wing as well as the right. But if Mr. Spivak refuses to be a guide he should be subpoenaed as a witness. His excellent articles in the *New Masses* show that he has a way with Nazis. He plucks their revolvers from their pockets, and their letters from his own; he announces the names and addresses of gentlemen known even to their intimates by numbers; he reports what is said at secret conclaves attended by a handful of carefully selected initiates. Part of what he has written has also been brought out by the Congressional committee and printed in the daily

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press; but this much only tends to corroborate the rest. Mr. Spivak has done an able job of old-fashioned muckraking, a combination of good reporting, good detective work, and good public service. The spread of Nazi spying and plotting, and of anti-Jewish and anti-radical propaganda, is a menace as well as a scandal. Perhaps it cannot be stamped out, but at least it can be exposed and known for what it is—a creeping paralysis that aims to wither everything in American life that is tolerant and humane and decent. If anyone objects that the spies and the plots so far uncovered are too fantastic to be worth serious attention, let him reflect that Hitler and his fanatics now rule Germany.

A FORM LETTER recently went to the 130,000 employees of General Motors outlining a new policy. "We of the General Motors," said the president, Alfred P. Sloan, Jr., who signed it, "recognize 'collective bargaining' as a constructive step forward, both for the employees and the management. Regardless of any obligations that may exist, we propose not only to continue the idea but to develop it." According to Mr. Sloan's eloquent letter, his new model of collective bargaining is even smarter than those put out by other industrial concerns. In addition to streamlining, knee action, merit clauses, and remote control, it incorporates a new device guaranteed to remove the last trace of operating strain from workers who have had a hard day on the assembly line. "The plan," runs the dispatch from Detroit, "was designed by the company to meet all requirements of Section 7-a of the NIRA. It has been in effect for several weeks. However, workers were first informed of it today." Mr. Sloan's definition of collective bargaining makes the term synonymous with employee-representation plans, that is, company unions. In no sense will the company union be empowered to negotiate wage contracts. It will be restricted in function to bringing complaints and grievances to the management's attention, but even here the last word in determining the validity of complaints will rest, not with a joint conference tribunal, not with an impartial arbitrator, but with the corporation's own Department of Industrial Relations! In short, General Motors reserves to itself the right of being plaintiff and judge in the same proceedings.

THE FORTHCOMING TRIAL in Sacramento of eighteen men and women on six counts of criminal syndicalism raises issues of profound significance to those who still believe in basic civil rights in this country. Convictions in this test case will open the path to the legal annulment, in California at least, of such fundamental American principles as the right to belong to political and economic organizations of one's own choice, and the basic right of freedom of political belief. It will mean, moreover, that it will be unlawful to buy, sell, or possess the works of Marx, Lenin, or other radical writers, or to belong to the Communist Party or any of its affiliates; and that it will be illegal to engage in boycotts or in picketing. (During arguments over demurrers the judge ruled all picketing to be unlawful.) Behind the prosecution of this case is the oligarchy that rules California's great interwoven empire of agriculture-processing-shipping finance. This oligarchy has definitely decided to rid itself of what it calls the "red menace," that is, the Cannery and Agriculturual Workers' Industrial Union, which succeeded after a series of strikes in increasing the wages paid to field workers from twenty to thirty cents an hour. For this success the union has paid heavily. At the time of the San Francisco general strike all its headquarters in the State were closed or wrecked by the police or vigilantes, and the officials of the union were arrested, charged with violation of the criminal-syndicalism laws. All the resources of the labor movement are now necessary to prevent them from being convicted and imprisoned for from six months to eighty-four years.

WE PUBLISH in the correspondence columns of this issue of *The Nation* a letter from the New York City Commissioner of Public Welfare, William Hodson, sent in response to a complaint made by a group of employees in the Home Relief Bureau about the discharge of one of their number. Commissioner Hodson and the Home Relief employees differ markedly about the fracas which occurred on September 27, although both of them agree that it ended in a general melee involving the protestants and the police. We should like first to inquire where the Commissioner received his information about the disturbance. Was it from the police or a more disinterested source? More important, however, is the general principle of the use of force by the police which his letter raises. Mr. Hodson several times remarks that the police used "no more force than was necessary." Just how much force is necessary on the part of policemen armed with billies and revolvers to quiet a group of unarmed citizens? If a citizen strikes an officer in the face with his clenched fist, must a "general melee" result? Has an officer the right to "meet force with force" (force, in this case, meaning retaliative violence)? And, finally, have the New York police a past record of restraint in the face of provocation sufficient to justify a public official of Mr. Hodson's importance officially to sanction meeting force with force? To these last three questions, we should unequivocally answer no.

IT IS generally taken for granted that business men are grateful when the National Guard helps to break a strike. But in California sins of omission are practically unheard of, and the business community of San Francisco wants the National Guard to know just how grateful it is. We quote from the San Francisco *Daily News* for October 10:

> Very quietly, the bigger business men of the town have been gathering up a fund to buy something for the National Guard. You may hear about it later because two points of view have developed concerning the move. The group behind it considers the contribution a tangible appreciation of the way Guard members have met the duties of citizenship. The opposition snorts that it's a tip to the guard for strike service.

A correspondent has sent us a photostat copy of the appeal for funds. It is headed "An Appreciation of Good Citizenship" and bears the names of important figures in the social and economic life of the Bay region who "are sponsoring a popular subscription the proceeds of which will be expended in a manner yet to be determined, but which will be of the greatest benefit in the development of the National Guard service." "Good citizenship" comes high, but no one knows better than the "bigger business men" of San Francisco and their company union, the Industrial Association, how well it pays.

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Employment Is Not Enough

"LOOKING BACKWARD" is an apt title for the thoughts of most business men as they survey the depression. All this, they say, would pass if only we could return to methods and habits of less dangerous days. They do not recognize that those seemingly safe days produced the succeeding disaster. Even many of the so-called "forward-looking" men are obsessed with the short swings of change, oblivious of the deep currents which alter the course of history. They do not see that the problems of America are only segments in the much more unmanageable problems of the world at large. Though they believe in the possibility of purely local recovery, they do not even try to discover the origin of the local malady. They reach no understanding because they neither look backward with sufficient insight nor coordinate American experience with that of the rest of the world.

The economic regime of today differs from that of a generation ago in one outstanding respect—the very nature of property has undergone a revolutionary transformation. The greater amount of it is no longer private but corporate. The profit system, once an individual inducement, has become very much an abstraction, alluring to the relatively few—the processors, distributors, and financiers who collect the profits—but of no great meaning to the majority of persons whose purchases supply them. The demand for a profit system, cogent in past years, today has a hollow ring, since it is a demand of the small minority in control of corporate wealth to continue their exploitation of the majority. The one justification would be the social service rendered, but in the mind of business men this amounts to little more than giving employment. It does not occur to them that under modern conditions any recovery based only on the profit inducement to corporate wealth, if that wealth is dominated by the few, would be the continuation of an economic dictatorship as foreign to original American conceptions as any other dictatorship.

We believe the final objective of the Roosevelt Administration is to weaken this dictatorship and bring a new era of decentralization in which property will again be private and profits an inducement to the many. The Tennessee Valley project, now to be copied in other parts of the country, aims to develop great regions in a way to avoid the concentration both of population and of wealth. This too may be an effort to turn back the clock, but at least it acknowledges that the real problem is not unemployment alone but the economic liberation of the individual from servitude to corporate wealth. The Roosevelt philosophy presents at least an alternative to the existing system. It may not be one within his power to achieve, if for no other reason than that it presupposes more patience than the country may be willing to contribute. The other alternative, putting the state in control of the economic destiny of the nation in the place of corporate wealth, appears to us much more in the line of natural evolution.

These thoughts come to us in publishing the first of four articles by business men on the current problems of the New Deal. Our first author, Mr. Wasserman, differs from most men in daily contact with finance in that he is not afraid. He pins his faith on the machine. He would bravely tie up civilization with its development, and he proposes a financial scheme which would tax old machinery in the interest of more and newer machinery. It is a sound program for a capitalist, and would assure the performance of the chief service of corporate wealth, employment, more successfully and permanently than the present regime can hope to do it. It may even be that his general objective is the one hope of the regime of wealth to survive for a time, since the community is still in a mood to yield its economic independence in return for the comforts of security. But even if all employables are put to work, the care of the aged and the infirm must still fall to the community, and we doubt whether the country would again accept a system which leaves their safety to the charitable impulses of philanthropists. What we miss from Mr. Wasserman's program is appreciation of the truth that the modern individual, however much he needs security, above all needs freedom, not merely freedom to provide himself with shelter and nourishment, but the freedom which comes from being an integral and responsible member of society. Granting that Mr. Wasserman's plan would put the unemployed to work, a people dominated by the corporate wealth which controls the machines would not tolerate a subordinate status longer than it remembered the anxieties of the depression and was thankful for safety. A machine-made economy would still be inherently unstable. Mr. Wasserman can retort that he is discussing an economic solution and not a philosophy. He may accept our criticism, and say he offers his plan in an attempt to do no more than bring clarity to the addled contradictions of Washington. But we cannot introduce his contribution and those to follow without reminding our readers that the philosophy matters even more than the brilliance of economic solutions.

A New Internationalism

IT is safe to say that no other step taken by the Roosevelt Administration carries with it such limitless possibilities as those suggested in the memorandum submitted by Messrs. Tugwell and Taylor, American delegates to the International Institute of Agriculture at Rome. Here, without the fanfare of publicity which accompanied the ill-fated World Economic Conference at London, we have a proposal that attempts for the first time to deal in a realistic manner with the basic problems of the world depression.

The London Economic Conference was essentially an attempt to restore an international laissez faire economic structure such as existed prior to the World War. On the assumption that existing maladjustments could be eliminated only through the restoration of economic flexibility, it concentrated on proposals for the leveling of trade barriers, the stabilization of currencies, and the revival of international lending. The conference failed, not because world interdependence had ceased to exist, but primarily because the desire for greater flexibility was in direct opposition to the whole trend of economic development. The New Deal in the United States, the new forms of economic organization in Germany and Italy, and the planned economy of the Soviet

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Union are merely the latest and most extreme manifestations of a tendency which has been apparent for the greater part of a century—for nations and groups, capital as well as labor, demand a larger measure of security than can be provided by a system of free competition.

With the collapse of the London conference the drift toward economic nationalism, as well as toward rigidity and planning, has continued unchecked. While there has been a certain degree of domestic recovery in many countries, international trade has not shared in the improvement. This has meant continued hardship for those sectors of the economy which are dependent on the world market. In the United States the pinch has been felt primarily, though not exclusively, in agriculture. The Administration's crop-reduction program has been matched by increased production abroad, so that its net effect has been far from beneficial. In recognition of this fact, those in charge of agricultural policy have increasingly come to realize that the United States must make a definite choice between its present nationalist policies and a restoration of the world market. The experience of the last few years has abundantly revealed the pitfalls besetting the nationalist path. A permanent loss of export markets not only would involve tremendous hardships during the transition period, but would entail lower living standards and a degree of regimentation wholly unpalatable to the average American. Yet restoration of the old order is beyond possibility.

The obvious solution of this dilemma lies in the extension of the principle of planning to the international sphere, which is essentially what has been suggested in the memorandum presented at Rome. While this entails grave difficulties, as illustrated by the vicissitudes of the international wheat agreement, it is the one road on which progress has been made during the past few years. Plans for international commodity control have been either formulated or actually put into effect in the case of sugar, wheat, rubber, and tea. In regard to other commodities, agreement has been blocked by the failure to win the cooperation of enough producers. But it is now widely recognized that there can be no solution of the anarchy existing in the production of basic raw material except through international cooperation.

The American memorandum not only recommends a thorough study of the results and possibilities of national and international production control, but suggests that agricultural planning on a world scale may be the means of avoiding a repetition of the events of recent years, and proposes that this planning be coordinated with long-range economic planning in other fields. It has the additional virtue of recognizing that little progress can be made toward international control as long as present trade barriers continue to exist, and that these in turn are closely bound up with monetary instability. It advocates a frank reexamination of current trade policies in order to determine whether they serve to increase international commerce, or whether they obstruct trade or divert it from its normal channels. But perhaps the most encouraging feature of the American proposal lies in its tentative nature. By no stretch of the imagination can it be charged that this is merely another utopian plan which the Brain Trust is seeking to impose on an unsuspecting world. It is flexible and exploratory in character, accepting the fact that the field of international economics has as yet scarcely been touched, even by so-called experts. Moreover, the scheme has the great advantage of having been presented unobtrusively—in striking contrast to the pitiless glare of publicity that attended every move at the London Economic Conference and made necessary concessions virtually impossible.

There can be no assurance that the memorandum will receive favorable consideration from the various foreign countries at the present time. Any proposal by the United States purporting to be in the interest of the world as a whole is bound to encounter suspicion. Recent developments in Germany, France, and the Far East indicate that the forces of economic nationalism are more powerful today than ever before. But the very extremes to which they have gone have created the necessity for a return to international cooperation. This will not be easy; it may not even be possible in view of the warlike passions which the economic struggle has engendered. But if it is to come at all it will be through patient study and research such as has been suggested at the International Institute of Agriculture.

The Epic of Upton Sinclair

IF the opponents of Upton Sinclair have left any stone unturned to prevent him from becoming Governor of California, we have not heard about it. As a result the State, and the nation as well, is fairly swarming with the low forms of life generally to be found under stones long unturned. Perhaps the most notable single specimen is the literature poured out by the United for California League, which calls itself non-partisan, presumably because it does not care who beats Sinclair. In a propaganda campaign that must be costing somebody a great deal of money, the league quotes from Mr. Sinclair's voluminous works to prove that he is an atheist who advocates revolution, communism, free love, and the scientific care of children. Like the Bible, the vast writings of Upton Sinclair can be cited to prove almost anything, but even one Bernice H. Johnson, who issues a leaflet in exactly the same format as those of the United for California League, has a hard time proving moral turpitude against the last American Puritan, Upton Sinclair.

The substantial opponents of Sinclair—the press, big business, and the Republican Party—are using other methods which have grown at once more hysterical and more unscrupulous with the approach of the fatal day, November 6. The Republican Party of California (and of Herbert Hoover) went to the length of making a friendly reference to the fantastic Townsend plan by which every worker past sixty would receive a federal pension of $200 a month, to be spent in thirty days if our present so-called economic system could stand up under it that long. What is much more serious, the Republican Attorney General has instigated actions in Los Angeles County to strike from the registration rolls 100,000 or more names, most of them from downtown working-class districts. The burden of proof rests upon the registrants and it is physically impossible to hear anything like 100,000 cases before election day. As a result thousands of voters are likely to be disfranchised—with violence at the polls certain to follow.

To describe this hair-raising opposition would, in the case

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of any other candidate, be equivalent to recording his defeat. But Upton Sinclair happens to know a thing or two about propaganda himself, and his counter-attacks, marked by the ingenious simplicity which is his special talent, have turned what might have been a sordid political dog fight into an enlightening and almost gay affair. When the flight of capital was announced, *Epic News,* Sinclair's weekly news sheet, reported that Mr. Sinclair (like St. Therese) was "not interested" in the results of a Wall Street manipulated stock market. To the accusation that he was an atheist, *Epic News* replied with an overwhelming resolution from the Methodist Preachers' Meeting of Southern California to the effect that Upton Sinclair "believes in a personal God." To the report that thousands of "hobos" were heading for California, *Epic News* replied that the statement was untrue, while Sinclair said in effect "What of it?" and went on to say that his policy was assuredly different from that of his opponents, who were determined to keep the people in California so poor that no one would be tempted to move in.

If Sinclair, during his campaign, has not proved that his own economic ideas are workable, he has proved that prevailing economic methods are definitely not workable, and in the process he has shown, in sometimes amusing and always vivid terms, who benefits by their non-workability. His analysis of California's present condition, in his latest campaign document, "Immediate Epic," is unanswerable. It also represents Sinclair's most ingenious achievement to date. When the Democratic Party took him under its nervous wing, it assumed that he would stay put, and the statements of leading Democrats supporting his candidacy were hopefully based on that assumption. He was persuaded to drop his idea of a $300,000,000 bond issue. But he has already flown over the capitalist fence again. In "Immediate Epic" he proposes a heavy tax payable in cash, goods, or services on all corporations assessed at $100,000 or more, without regard to income. In a blithe paragraph he says:

> Let us take the Southern Pacific Railroad as an example. The Southern Pacific is now burdened with a great bond issue whose interest must be met. It is compelled to maintain its rights of way, tracks, and rolling stock. It has a far-flung executive organization. Its capacity to do business is vastly more than the business being done. If it paid a tax in the transportation of new freight, this would mean only hooking on to existing trains an occasional car for the State, and such new business would necessitate but a small amount of additional labor, fuel, and upkeep. Careful study makes it appear that the railroads of the State could pay an Epic tax for not more than 20 per cent of value measured in their customary rates.

We are sure that the Southern Pacific will be delighted if and when Mr. Sinclair takes it as an example.

Given the average American legislature and the endless network of legal devices by which the owners of the country's wealth are able to escape "confiscatory" taxes, Mr. Sinclair, as Governor, would find it almost impossible to put EPIC into effect. But if he proves that even his cheerful brand of social planning cannot be imposed upon a capitalist State, that will be worth finding out. Meanwhile the rights of workers would receive more consideration than they have had for some time in California. Tom Mooney, who would go free one half-minute after eleven on the morning of January 7, is one of the workers we have in mind.

An Ellis Island for Books

"LITERARY Expert Made Censor of Book Imports." Thus runs the headline in the New York *Herald Tribune,* but the fact is not really as bad as it is made to sound. Thanks largely to the effort of Morris L. Ernst and others, the Customs Department has learned that it cannot really have a censor however much it might like the privilege, and the courts with whom the final decision on any book lies have recently shown an encouragingly liberal tendency. In the now famous case of "Ulysses" the guardians of our portals proposed but the Justices Hand disposed, and the surprising adventures of Mr. Bloom are now to be had at any bookstore.

What the new appointment really means is that the authorities of the Treasury Department have decided henceforth to consult some literate person before making a decision which is likely to be called into open question before a federal court. In the past it has worked in mysterious ways. Officially, at least, no one knew who read the books which were denied admission, and the common suspicion that the office boy was glad to oblige seemed justified by some of the odd proceedings—as when, for example, copies of the "Decameron" were held up, despite the fact that it had been printed and sold in this country for many years. In the future the authorities propose to look before they leap, and if any silly moves are made we shall at least have the satisfaction of knowing who is responsible. Huntington Cairns, a Baltimore lawyer, is the bearer of the new and odd title "literary expert attached to the Collector of Customs." He is said to be a gentleman of cultivated and literate tastes, and we probably have good reason to rejoice that the appointment did not go instead to some prominent Nice-Nellie or to some Board of Snoopers appointed by the D. A. R. and the Federation of Women's Clubs.

This is not, however, to say that we envy Mr. Cairns his job or think that he or anybody else is needed. We see no reason why the prosecution of books printed abroad should not be left to the District Attorney's office, which is responsible for action against allegedly obscene works printed in this country. In the first place, the latter arrangement puts both the initiative and the burden of proof up to the prosecution, instead of, as is the case with foreign books, allowing an arbitrary action against which the proprietors of the confiscated works have merely the power of making a legal protest. In the second place, the whole assumption that some special precaution has to be taken against wicked foreign influence seems to us a remnant of the ancient theory that Europe is a wicked old man bent upon corrupting the innocent youth of America. Nevertheless, we have some hope for Mr. Cairns and a good deal of faith in the power of publicity. He is not, we understand, the kind of man likely to take a Comstockian pleasure in exhibiting himself as one of those pure to whom all things are simply terrible. Any time that he feels himself slipping and begins to get that after-all-we-must-draw-the-line-somewhere feeling, we suggest that he pay a visit to the Columbia University library, which has just accepted as a historical treasure the very copy of "Ulysses" which the Customs Bureau held impounded for several years.

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Issues and Men

Jim and the Jobs

HOW President Roosevelt can retain Postmaster-General Farley in his Cabinet after the publication of that shameless spoilsman's letter to Robert Moses, written in January, 1931, is beyond my understanding. It gives the lie to the spirit of the New Deal to retain in high office a man guilty of practices against which the most enlightened elements in American life have been battling for more than fifty years. It gives the lie to President Roosevelt's own statement that narrow partisan politics have no place in the New Deal and in the effort to rescue the American people from their economic disaster. If the President retains Mr. Farley he cannot avoid the charge that in a dire national crisis he is permitting the playing of politics to insure his reelection; that he is disregarding the question of efficiency in governmental office in favor of political favoritism of the most flagrant kind.

The only thing that can be said in favor of Mr. Farley is that he has the frankness of an uncontrolled pirate. He glories in his shame. "I must confess," wrote Mr. Farley, on the stationery of the Democratic State Committee, "that I don't agree with your method of selecting men . . . by a board of engineers. My attitude, Bob, would be to appoint no one but Democrats." Now it may be urged that this letter was written two years before President Roosevelt became the head of the nation and put Mr. Farley into the Cabinet. But the simple truth is that Mr. Farley has been one of the President's greatest liabilities ever since he took office. He has been playing politics from the start, and favoring not the appointment of the most efficient men but of "deserving Democrats." The trail of politics was obvious throughout the administration of the CWA and was probably one reason that the President abandoned it so quickly in the face of the protests of social workers everywhere. But that was not the only place where politics were being played. The recommendations for the appointment of instructors in the New York State CCC camps lay upon a certain official's desk for five months last winter simply because there were not as many Democrats on the list as that official thought there should be. As for Mr. Farley himself, he is being almost as frank about his political activities as he was when he was writing that letter to "Dear Bob."

In no other country in the world that claims to be civilized and in the front rank of nations can such things happen. Throughout its entire existence of sixty-nine years *The Nation* has fought against the spoils system as one of the most important causes of the corruption and degradation of our political life. During those decades progress has been made toward eradicating this evil. But we have gone backward since the Roosevelt Administration took office. It is true the President has announced that all fourth-class postmasters are to be transferred to the classified service, but the enormous increase in offices during the New Deal has given Mr. Farley his opportunity, and he has not failed to make the most of it. It is a commonplace that to get a job in Washington, unless you can apply directly to officials of the high caliber of Frances Perkins or Harold Ickes, or others like them, you have got to bring a certificate from your Democratic State Committee that you are a good and loyal Democrat, thoroughly deserving. We have turned back the hands of the clock for about fifty years. Not that politics haven't been played under every Administration, but for the sort of unblushing spoilsmanship that has been going on under Farley one must go back to the late seventies and to the assassination of President Garfield by a disappointed office seeker. James G. Blaine was at that time one of the chief defenders of the spoils system. He never lost a chance to denounce reformers who demanded that the United States should have a civil service at least as good as that of France and Germany, and, above all, Great Britain. On December 10, 1880, writing to the President-elect, Mr. Garfield, he referred to the reformers as "upstarts, conceited, foolish, vain . . . noisy but not numerous, pharisaical but not practical, ambitious but not wise, pretentious but not powerful." As his latest biographer, Professor David S. Muzzey, points out, he opposed the efforts of President Hayes to uplift the service and upheld the playing of politics in the New York Custom House.

But when Guiteau murdered President Garfield, and the National Civil Service League was formed immediately thereafter, when the Pendleton Act was passed in 1883, which resulted in the creation of the Civil Service Commission and President Arthur's transfer of some 14,000 offices to the classified list, even Mr. Blaine had to call a different tune. In his eulogy of Garfield, spoken before the Congress, he had to assert that the dead President had been "earnestly seeking some practical way of correcting the evils arising from the distribution of overgrown and unwieldy patronage." There have been few politicians engaged in the award of political offices as party spoils since that time who have not at least made some excuses, or tried to hide their activities, or blushed a little when they were exposed. But Mr. Farley belongs squarely in the era of Guiteau, of Blaine, of the scandals of Ulysses S. Grant. No man can play the politics that he is playing and assert that his methods are anything else than a blow at the efficiency and integrity of our governmental machine.

Mr. President, you were taught different things at Harvard. Your associations have always been of a different kind. Innumerable independents like myself have been upholding you since you undertook the New Deal, and are most sincerely anxious to maintain our faith in the sincerity and honesty of your Administration. You could do nothing more certain to strengthen and encourage us in that faith than to find another job for Mr. Farley. We have said this before. We shall continue to say it until Mr. Farley is removed, or your Administration ends.

Oswald Garrison Villard

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Liberal Futility and a New Approach

By WILLIAM STIX WASSERMAN

IT is difficult to be hopeful regarding the American outlook. The events of the past few months have forced me to the conclusion that instead of a clear-cut economic policy and leadership which might inspire the country, we have in Washington a combination of muddy idealism and incompetence acting in a more or less opportunist manner, with no definite forward-looking plan. This does not mean that in the Administration there are not brilliant and conscientious individuals striving honestly to give the country a fairer and more decent government. But these individuals are lost in the contradictions which they create and in the lack of a unifying personality that will hold to a single path regardless of the political tempests that may blow across it. I know that it is easy to criticize President Roosevelt; that his job is colossally difficult, almost too difficult for any single human being; that he is honestly trying to create a workable system. I will even go farther and say that I believe he thinks he is preserving the best of the old capitalism and merely reforming where reform is necessary. But I think that he is doing all of this without clearly understanding the basic principles which underlie our economic situation and without being willing to take the necessary steps that might create either a workable capitalism or a workable semi-socialism.

If the Administration wants socialism in this country, then we have the right to expect that the measures it takes will be designed to give us the best socialistic rule possible. If it wants capitalism it should make the functioning of capitalism possible. If it wants a mixture of both—and even that is possible within limits—it should create a condition in which each can function where best adapted. But what has been created is an atmosphere in which neither can work. In fact, the type of so-called economic planning the Administration has been fostering centers primarily around an attempt to control production and raise prices. Controlled production is only another name for restricted production, and the attempt legally to keep "prices above costs" results merely in an impossible effort to guarantee a profit to the inefficient producer. Whatever prosperity we in America have had in the past has resulted from a philosophy of mass production in unrestricted volume and at lessening prices.

We know that the mainspring of private industry is the desire for profit, and coincident with the desire for profit the thing that keeps the capitalist system going is the constant reinvestment of savings in new enterprise. We know that this reinvestment of savings will not take place unless there is confidence and unless there is a possibility of profit, and we know that without this reinvestment of savings heavy industry ceases to work, and we have the disequilibriums that create depression.

We also know that a free market is the only type of market in which capitalism can really flourish, and that relatively free competition is absolutely essential to capitalism. Unless the business man is free to take a loss when it becomes necessary to move merchandise at the price the market is willing to pay, we get stagnation and a further inability of the market to consume. The Administration, in conjunction with business leaders who looked only at the immediate profit without realizing the long-term consequences of their own actions, by attempts to fix prices and to regulate methods and volume of production, has created a strait-jacket for business. Manufacturers are unwilling to undertake production for the future if they fear that government interference will put them in such a rigid position that they will be unable to extricate themselves.

In their own way the capitalists of the country are on strike. They are refusing to invest in new enterprise. Why? Because neither present profits nor the hope of future profits are there. Yet the government does not mediate with these strikers as it does with labor. Indeed, it gives some evidence of favoring a permanent lock-out of capital. Instead of making some concessions or creating a little inducement to capital to start functioning again, the Administration continues to antagonize it. The greatest blunder has been to start the wheels working toward comparatively advanced social legislation, which places a direct burden upon production and thus results in increased prices and lessened production. These in turn bring about lessened purchasing power and heighten the uncertainty of future profit. The more imminent the prospect of heavy unemployment insurance, old-age pensions, and other forms of expensive and bureaucratic governmental paternalism, the greater the mortgage on future profits and the smaller the inducement to capital to assume the risk of new enterprise. A distinction, however, should be noted between the above types of social legislation and minimum-wage and maximum-hour laws, which tend to speed up the introduction of new machinery.

We might have a chance to go the other route, that of semi-socialism, if the government were willing in a large way to step forward as a producer of capital for our railroads, for our building, for all of heavy industry; but instead it offers a timid compromise. The government does advance capital, it tries to do it in conjunction with private capital, but the effort is totally inadequate. The government does just enough to prevent a crisis—just enough relief work to prevent starvation, just enough lending of money to banks to prevent any banking difficulty, just enough hand-outs to industry to create a partial functioning. So we go along, a limping capitalism in a state of drift, drawing upon our immense reservoirs of wealth, which are still so great that we can continue to sin against the system without too drastic consequences. What will be the result? The continuance of a half-baked capitalism with so-called liberal trimmings and the eventual necessity of an alliance between the intelligent liberal and the mossback tory, because the liberals in power have not the courage, the understanding, or the character to put into effect the drastic radical measures that would produce results.

In attempting to meet the demand for an alternate course of procedure, it is, of course, not possible to set down the exact details of an entire program. It would also be fool-

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ish to do so, because in practical political and economic life opportunism must play a great part. It is possible, however, to outline a different approach to our problems based upon a more scientific analysis of capitalism.

Any plan which offers a new approach to the situation must fulfil certain fundamental requirements. First, it must be in harmony with the present state of technical development and should stimulate rather than retard further technical advances. Second, it must be more than either a direct or an indirect redistribution of wealth; more than a semi-socialistic reshuffling of the cards, which would soon be nullified by newly arising inequalities. Third, to be effective, it must have a popular appeal.

I have criticized the New Deal with its NRA and other restrictive legislation for not touching the fundamental difficulty of our situation, namely, the proper adjustment of the rate of the investment of capital to the development of the technique of machine production, which, contrary to popular opinion, shows a steady progress regardless of booms and depressions. In the past every period of prosperity has coincided with the exploitation of new technique. Our booms were brought on by over-exploitation, our depressions by under-exploitation. The popular belief is that new inventions come in waves, that we have periods of great inventiveness which create their own cycles of prosperity. The truth is that the rate of inventions, or the development of new technique, is a steady stream, flowing regardless of the business cycle. The unstable factor is the speed of exploitation, the flow of capital into new enterprise. Here one comes face to face with numerous counter-influences, the most important being the purely psychological one called confidence. Confidence in turn is influenced by monetary conditions as well as by the social and governmental outlook. As long as we had a frontier and a rapidly increasing population we did not have to face the problem of the business cycle, or under-exploitation of new technique, in its fullest intensity. The continuous expansion of the frontier or, in the case of Europe, the development of colonial states created such a broad social safety-valve that even in periods of severe depression capitalistic confidence was not sufficiently impaired to prevent the constant flow of new technique from creating a stream of fresh activity.

It can be demonstrated that in recent business cycles, during the period of inflation preceding depression, there has been a point at which prices and volume have risen sufficiently to permit old machinery that had been previously discarded to come back into operation. The use of this equipment contributes more to a state of overproduction than the use of new machinery, which obviously created considerable purchasing power while it was being manufactured. The manufacture of new machinery is, as a matter of fact, one of the greatest sources of the creation of purchasing power. Furthermore, it is in the effort to keep old machinery in operation in competition with new that the worst abuses of industrial exploitation occur.

With this in mind, I would suggest, as an alternative to the type of social legislation advocated by the present Administration and by most so-called liberal politicians, that our legislative program should be centered around our adjustment to the development of machinery and our control of the technique of production. Without going into details, I will merely suggest the approach, in the following points:

1. Legislation to induce idle capital into a constant and speedy investment in new machinery. Such legislation must center around existing practice and be based primarily upon a new concept of taxation which would amount to enticing private capital into investment rather than deterring it.

2. Legislation to compel the systematic scrapping of old machinery, which requires intense exploitation of labor and sharp business practice to keep in operation.

Concretely, I would recommend the following measures: (1) income-tax exemption in proportion to investment in new enterprise; (2) governmental financial assistance for new productive enterprise provided there is equivalent scrapping; (3) no government assistance for the purpose of keeping old machinery in operation; (4) bonuses for scrapping old equipment—this includes housing; (5) new tax provisions for depreciation and obsolescence charges; (6) condemnation of old machinery, plants, and houses on the basis of public safety, public health, and the protection of minimum standards of employment; (7) minimum wages and maximum hours to be used not only as a protection for the standard of living but also as an additional and effective means of forcing the scrapping of marginal machinery and stimulating the production of new. With these basic points in mind an entire program of mechanical rehabilitation of the country could be commenced under government supervision and with governmental financial assistance. This would take up unemployment more quickly than any plan yet advanced. Few of us realize the magnitude of the business of manufacturing machinery in years in which our system is expanding. In 1929 alone more than $7,000,000,000 was invested by private capital in new machinery—a billion and a quarter more than the volume of building contracts.

The obvious difficulty of an alternative program of this nature is the business of "selling the idea," making it sufficiently popular for practical execution. Nothing is clearer today than that power goes to the strong salesman of ideas. Now social legislation of the New Deal type and even such measures as unemployment insurance and old-age pensions are comparatively easy to sell to the public at large. Their stagnating effect upon the development of civilization is so slow and gradual and so indirect that it is hard to dramatize it to the present generation. Nevertheless, I think it not a hopeless task to sell a sounder, more progressive, and more fundamental program. The appeal of current social legislation is entirely to security. A more progressive plan would cater to the ambition of youth as well as to security. A general raising of all standards must be pitted against the gradual leveling and lowering of conditions of life in a semi-frozen civilization. There is just as much room for dramatic word painting in heralding the approach of opportunity and growth as in picturing security. What a glorious slogan —"Rebuild America!"—and what a real prosperity could be accomplished under that slogan. In the long run, whether it would be feasible politically would depend upon the latent vitality of the nation. It would be a struggle between the ambition of youth and the desire for security of old age.

[*The new approach to an industrial solution outlined in this article was the joint work of Mr. Wasserman and Arthur Paul, based on the experience of Mr. Paul in the textile industry. Three other articles by business men, presenting a cross-section of capitalist opinion of the New Deal, will follow in early issues.*]

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A Trip Around the Soviet Union

By LOUIS FISCHER

Moscow, September 7

I HAVE just completed a forty-day trip through the Soviet Union. Beginning at Leningrad, I went to Moscow, then Dnieperstroi—now known as New Zaporozhie—Kharkov, Rostov-on-the-Don, Tiflis, Erivan, back to Tiflis, from there to Batum, Sukhum, Gagri, Yalta, Odessa, Kiev, and now Moscow again. Of these regions only Armenia was new to me. It was my fourth trip to Leningrad, my tenth to the Ukraine, my fourth to the Caucasus, and my second to the Crimea. I investigated the Putilov works in Leningrad, the Frazer tool factory in Moscow, the steel mills at New Zaporozhie, the Kharkov tractor plant (for the third time), a milk and ice-cream plant in Rostov, a cigarette factory in Tiflis, a cognac distillery in Erivan, a tea factory in Batum, a wine cellar in the Crimea. I waded knee-deep through the unfinished tunnels of the Moscow subway. I visited an agricultural collective and two state farms near Kharkov, two collectives in the North Caucasus, Georgian mountain settlements, and villages under the snowcap of Mt. Ararat. I interviewed the assistant president of the Leningrad Soviet, the prime minister of Georgia, the deputy prime minister of Trans-Caucasia, the acting premier of Soviet Armenia, the head of the Moslem church in Armenia, the Catholicus or Pope of the Armenian church, the chairman of the Jewish Social Committee in Tiflis, and authors, cinema directors, factory directors, physicians, nurses, scores of workingmen at their lathes and on vacation, peasants, hotel managers, waiters, chauffeurs, officials, students, engineers, lawyers, journalists, fellow train travelers, foreign tourists, and children. I spent hours in workers' private homes, peasant huts, courts, rest homes, sanatoria, churches, parks, cafes, stores. Against a twelve-year background such a six weeks' intensive study brings the whole scene into sharp focus and warrants a synthetic statement on the general situation in Soviet Russia.

I need hardly say—but I do say it because of the stupid fiction regularly renewed abroad—that I saw what I wanted to see. I chose the collectives and the factories I wished to look at. I conversed with workers and peasants, in private, in their own language. When I was inspecting workingmen's settlements or villages, I went ahead and knocked at the door I selected. No one dictated my movements; in fact, no one tried to do so. I saw the good and the bad, and plenty of both. What are my conclusions?

The Soviet Union is overflowing with energy. The Bolsheviks have split the social atom and released unlimited units of energy which are being directed into the channel of national upbuilding. The country is growing fast. Russia is quickly becoming a great economic power. The population is full of confidence, enthusiasm, and faith in Russia's future. Those who took an optimistic view of Soviet prospects have been more than vindicated, and the skeptics should soon discover that their emotions are warping their judgment. All over the land the atmosphere tingles with vitality and hope. Everybody is working. Plans involving hundreds of millions of rubles and gigantic enterprises have been fulfilled, are being fulfilled, and are being drafted. Nothing is too vast. Nothing is considered impossible. One feels oneself in the midst of a tremendous creative process.

There is no evidence that the revolution is becoming institutionalized or "sober" or conservative. On the contrary, the success which has crowned earlier daring projects encourages even braver assaults on the forces of nature and backwardness. Nor is there the slightest fear that the home market will ever fail to absorb the products of a vastly expanded industrial plant. Rich new natural resources are being developed in the Caucasus and in other regions. For the first time in its history Armenia is producing precious molybdenum, carbide, and synthetic rubber. It has quadrupled its copper output. Tobacco growing has been introduced. The 3,500 hectares under cotton in pre-revolutionary times have become 18,000. At Leninakan, "Armenia's Manchester," a 100,000-spindle textile plant is being constructed; 40,000 spindles are already working. Armenia is also erecting a big knitting mill, a textile unit for fine prints, a soap factory, and a canning factory with an annual capacity of 100,000,000 cans of fruit and vegetables. Huge deposits of tuff, a porous volcanic rock of a delightful rose color, are being exploited on a large scale and the product sent north or used locally for numerous buildings springing up in Erivan.

Soviet Georgia too is booming. Arsenic, gold, and molybdenum have been discovered. The beginnings of an aluminum industry are being laid. Oil mining in Shirak is being expanded. The big ferro-manganese plant opened three years ago is operating now at full blast. Sugar beets have been introduced into Georgia, and a sugar factory converting these local supplies was started in 1933. A margarine factory has just been finished. In two months a giant mill to fill all of Tiflis's flour requirements will be opened. Tea cultivation is spreading far and wide. Around Batum I noted many more tea plantations. By 1937, Premier Mgaloblishvili declared, the Soviet Union expects to dispense entirely with tea imports, which amounted in 1930 to 53,000,000 pounds. Lemon, tangerine, and grape-fruit orchards are being enlarged. By 1936, 500,000 acres of the Kolhida marches near the Black Sea will have been prepared for settlement. The newspapers are now calling for pioneers to occupy parts already drained. Two and a half million acres of arid soil in Eastern Georgia and Azerbaijan will be put under cotton cultivation by damming the Kura River at Midandukhaura with a wall one kilometer long and sixty-three meters high now in the process of construction. This enterprise will enable the Caucasus to multiply its cotton crop by five. The water power of the Caucasus, once neglected, is being harnessed. While I was in Tiflis, the Rionges hydroelectric station (capacity 48,000 kilowatts) was opened. Next year Tkvarchelges (38,000 kilowatts), Sukhumges (10,000), and Kana-kirges (60,000) will be ready. Today the Caucasus produces 310,000 kilowatts of electric energy; in 1937 this will be brought up to 800,000. And the Caucasus is only one small corner of the Soviet continent.

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It merely serves as an illustration of what is happening throughout the country.

All cities are bursting their bounds. Kharkov has blossomed into a bustling metropolis. Rostov extends its "Socialist City." Erivan, which had 13,000 inhabitants in 1913, today boasts a population of 110,000. It sounds unbelievable but the eye confirms the figures. Kiev, having become the capital of the Ukraine, has been galvanized into life after years of hibernation. Many streets are torn up; many houses are in construction. "Next summer," I was told, "Kiev will be stood on its head. And a year later we will put it back on its feet again." The Bolsheviks hope to make Kiev a finer city than Vienna. Even Odessa, which has lost its significance as a port and is becoming a health resort, has grown. Tiflis alone remains stagnant. During the first Five-Year Plan the U. S. S. R.'s urban population increased by 10,000,000. The process continues.

The villages too are dominated by the new Soviet "go-getting" spirit. Collectivization is so firmly intrenched that any discussion of its permanence is unrealistic. The Soviet harvest this year is not so good as in 1933. In the central Volga region, Western Siberia, Odessa, and elsewhere it is excellent. Some collectives I visited had a better crop than last year. But usually one heard that it was worse. Everywhere I went I asked the same question: "Have you any reserves from 1933?" And invariably the reply was in the affirmative; the Russian peasant has been through too many ordeals to sell every last pood of a bumper yield. The Soviet government exported 27,000,000 tons from last year's grain yield. It is shipping grain abroad now, but one hopes the quantity will not exceed 10,000,000 tons. The vegetable, potato, fruit, and mushroom crops are very large everywhere.

Had it not been for collectivization, the extended drought would have wrought much more havoc in the grain-growing areas. The wider use of tractors, better agronomical advice, and Moscow's insistence advanced the plowing season by several weeks, and thus gave spring crops access to more winter moisture. Fallow plowing and extensive weeding of wheat, practices not at all common in Russia, helped to conserve moisture. In hill regions, Kabardina-Balkaria for instance, streams were hurriedly dammed by the collective efforts of whole villages working day and night; their waters saved the crop of many a parched field. The peasants appreciate that these results would have been impossible under the previous small-holding, individualistic system. But the grain tax is often excessive, and some rural administrators raise it arbitrarily and illegally with impunity. This is an unfortunate vestige of pre-1933 days which will check the collectives' ardor if it is not stopped.

Generally speaking, then, production in city and village has registered tremendous progress. Distribution, however, is a mess. Part of the difficulty is bad freight transportation by land and water (passenger service has improved), but the trouble goes much deeper. Goods lie in warehouses and rot while the consumer searches for them in one store after another. Widespread inefficiency and endless red-tape bureaucracy are aggravated by equally widespread speculation and the venality of petty officials. The Soviet press regularly prints details of the misdemeanors of store managers and cooperative employees. But though the cancer is exposed, it remains.

Apart from the crudeness of sales methods (no ready-made packages; cutting and weighing of bread instead of baking a standard loaf; standing in three queues each time an article is bought—once to choose it, then to pay the cashier, and finally to receive the purchase; absence of cash registers, and so on) the root of the difficulty is the shortage of goods and the consequent price-variation system. After all, when one man pays 60 rubles for a suit which his neighbor cannot get under 400 rubles, there is an irresistible pull toward speculation. Workingmen, therefore, who receive cheap commodities in their closed cooperatives are speculating as much as anybody else. The workers, what with their double bread ration at low prices and two meals a day with extra bread in their factories, have surplus bread. They can be seen outside the bakeries disposing of it at a profit in order to obtain money for purchases on the free market where prices are high and where they find goods not available in many cooperatives. The ramifications of this system are endless. Suffice it to say here that the government cannot yield to the country-wide demand for a one-price arrangement until the ruble has appreciated further, and such appreciation, in turn, must wait upon an increase in the supply of goods. Yet even that hoped-for consummation cannot altogether eliminate corrupt practices by salesmen and managers if the cooperatives do not become real cooperatives. At present they are merely state stores with no control from below.

Meanwhile, however, people are better dressed and better fed. In Moscow, Kiev, Tiflis, and Odessa many cafes have been opened, and on an evening they are gay with light and music. Shops everywhere are better stocked. There is no longer any shortage of soap or shoes. (But the cigarette famine persists in many districts, and in Odessa, immediately after an excellent harvest, bread was scarce.) The candy and pastry shops in Kiev dispense sweets of first-class quality. Sugar prices have come down.

People throughout the country look happier. Now the problem of leisure is presenting itself, and it will be interesting to watch the Communists attempt a solution. Amusement parks are crowded; more are needed. There are more dancing, more singing, more sports (Russia had no sports before the revolution), more space devoted to sports in the newspapers, and much more reading of books. The Soviet cinema, however, which used to be the best in the world and perhaps still is, has produced few good pictures in the last two years, and the population feels it. The country wants more interesting films, better drama, and literature of finer quality. Youth that is bored gets into mischief, and one sees young folks on the streets occasionally, especially down south, who are certainly bored.

Russia's politics and economics have advanced beyond Russia's culture and technique. This formula explains most of the weaknesses and shortcomings of the Soviet Union. Yet these very weaknesses emphasize Bolshevik strength, for they suggest how rich the quality of the revolution must be if it can register such imposing progress despite all its handicaps. The overwhelming impression one gets here is of the compelling logic of Soviet policy. Self-evident reason connects one major Soviet measure with another, and all form an intelligent and easily intelligible whole which Bolsheviks love to contrast with the illogic of capitalist recovery measures.

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British Parties in Conference

By HAROLD J. LASKI

London, October 7

BOTH the Labor and the Conservative parties have held their annual conferences this week, and each has provided a significant index to the temper of the time. The Labor Party went right wing with emphasis. It rejected every resolution which even suggested a frontal attack on capitalism. It showed by immense majorities its passionate dislike of the disruptive tactics of the Communists by threatening expulsion to any member who even associated with Communists in relief work in behalf of the victims of German fascism. Having welcomed the entry of Russia into the League, it adopted a peace program which, despite some stray Marxist phrases, could, I think, be accepted without difficulty by a strong internationalist like Lord Cecil. Its program, broadly, is socialistic. It will have nothing to do with any measures which even threaten a break with the gradualist tradition. The whole emphasis of the votes was upon the belief that a sufficient tenderness toward existing vested interests will somehow persuade the capitalist to accept his erosion gracefully when a Labor government with a majority is in office.

What did it all mean? Above all that, as the general elections begin to loom, the party machine, backed by the unions, is not willing to risk the loss of votes by the adoption of a drastic program. Next in importance is the fact that the trade unions are still more interested in social reform than in socialism; and their leaders do not believe in the permanence of capitalist decline. Thirdly, the effect of fascism has been to emphasize not the fragility of the democratic structure but its value; few delegates are willing to do anything that might tempt the Conservatives into a fascist outlook. Mr. Morrison and his colleagues are gambling on the hope that the British habit of compromise will prevail even when essentials are at issue. They refuse to accept the Marxian view of the state as a class instrument. They still believe that it can be used in the interest of a "community" which is above and beyond the constituent parts of which it is composed. What they did not explain is how they can accomplish a socialist transformation of Great Britain when their defeat would lead to their replacement in office by a party which has hardly any article of faith except the view that socialist measures are wholly evil. But it was difficult to sit through the conference without the sense that, for Mr. Morrison and his friends, the relation of democracy and capitalism was not a subject which it was quite polite to discuss in stark essentials. Only Mr. Mellor did that; and when Mr. Morrison, often brilliantly, scored his debating points against him, the conference was obviously delighted.

While Labor was defining itself as a party of advanced social reform, the Conservatives were making it clear that any serious social reform is anathema to them. They passed unanimously a resolution demanding immediate "reform" of the House of Lords; by which they mean safeguarding it from the danger of reconstruction by a future Labor government. They resolved, again unanimously, that we must have more armaments; and it was significant that Lord Lloyd's denunciation of the naval treaty of 1929 was warmly applauded. They passed, also unanimously, a demand for compensation for the owners of slum property in all clearance schemes—a policy which, if adopted, would make the cost almost prohibitive. And an effort to condemn the Indian reforms before we know even the outline of the government program for India was only defeated by twenty votes in a poll of one thousand. The general attitude of the conference to the "National" government was one of greatly tempered enthusiasm. It was clear enough that the party only clings to it as a method of preventing Labor from attaining power.

What is the situation in British politics at the moment? It is, I think, clear that Mr. Baldwin and his colleagues count on winning the next election, though with a greatly reduced majority, if they can only keep their diehards in order. I think they will do so until then. But I think, also, that they will have to pay the price after that election in many ways they do not contemplate with equanimity. They will be driven to strengthen the House of Lords. They will be compelled, unless there is a rapid trade recovery, to acquiesce in an attack upon wages in the sheltered industries. They will have to increase the estimates for the fighting services. They will have to stand firm against any further concessions to India. They will have to leave alone any large-scale measures of social reconstruction.

And this policy will have its repercussions upon the Labor Party. Unless the latter wins power next time, it seems to me certain that the present temper of gradualism will rapidly change. The left wing is much stronger in influence than appeared in the votes of this year's conference. It has won over most of the local Labor parties. Three or four years more of opposition under bad economic conditions will give its views a firm grip upon three at least of the big trade unions. Any further attack upon wages would have an immediate effect upon that part of the rank and file which thinks that the present trade-union leadership has done pretty well under adverse circumstances. The case for the very moderate policy which has just been adopted is the "realist" argument that it may win the next general election. Unless it does this, time and the nature of capitalist democracy are on the side of Sir Stafford Cripps and his school of thought.

Much play has been made in England in the last few days of Mr. Roosevelt's compliments to the way in which we have weathered the present world crisis; and both Mr. MacDonald and Mr. Baldwin have drawn attention to his eulogies as proof of the excellence of their administration. I do not know if this was Mr. Roosevelt's intention. If it was, it shows a singular inability, in a man of his political sensitiveness, to grasp what is happening in this country: failure in the international sphere; failure in every aspect of domestic policy except agriculture; and a success there by subsidizing the farmer at the expense of the consumer and the taxpayer. Mr. Roosevelt, we are told, spoke with enthusiasm of the success of Mr. Chamberlain's conversion loan. But he might have noticed that in coal, in cotton, in

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iron and steel, in shipbuilding, there is not a single contribution of ideas from this government except by way of subsidy or tariff. There is a reduction in the number of unemployed, but there is an increase in the number on the poor law. What this government suffers from, even in the view of its own supporters, is an excessive complacency on the one hand and an absence of will and energy on the other. We have come out of the crisis better than most countries because our accumulated reserves are so much greater; not because a will to positive reorganization has distinguished the activities of the government. Mr. Roosevelt has intimate advisers well acquainted with the British position. He would do well to discuss its meaning with them before he models his policy upon ours.

A Trial Period for Business

By RAYMOND GRAM SWING

Washington, October 22

A NEW era has begun—the reconciliation between the New Deal and business. These are the days when even a Morgan partner, Russell Leffingwell, calls at the White House, not to mention many others of the fraternity of bankers. The crusading banners of the New Deal have been furled and set in a corner. The New Deal is being explained to business men. They are being told that they always were wrong about it; it never meant an attack on the profit system, it never meant government competition with private enterprise, it offered and still offers every legitimate opportunity for legitimate business to function.

Peace between the New Deal and business can only be had at a price, and the first thing to seek underneath the new words of explanation and good-will is the price the Administration is willing to pay for cooperation. Aside from a relaxation of its own acerbity, it apparently will pay concretely very little. The one concession consistently mentioned in government circles is a further modification in the Securities Act. This will be given with a purpose. Corporation finance should be having the benefit of refunding at low rates of interest. This is being hampered. The fault, according to business men, is with the new legislation. The Administration believes it really lies with Wall Street, which has not learned to use the new Washington machinery. But Washington is willing to soften the new laws if it means that the new machinery will be used freely. For when refinancing has been accomplished, corporations will be in a position to use their depreciation reserves for replacement. Replacement is another word for the purchase of capital goods, and a healthy revival of business depends on stimulating the capital-goods market.

For some time the President has been told that business is ready to go ahead if only given an atmosphere of confidence. He has been urged to quiet the misapprehensions about his objectives. Now he has thrown himself into an experiment: he is being friendly to business. He is reassuring business leaders that their fears have been unworthily exaggerated. He is giving private enterprise a chance to come through and produce a revival.

Some people, on remarking the new face on affairs in Washington, will say that they are not surprised, that the New Deal never was a sincere attempt to get at the root of the country's troubles, and that the President sooner or later was bound to capitulate to Wall Street. But the present pleasantness to business in the White House is not capitulation. It is, as I have said, an experiment. Business is not being wooed, it is being put on trial. The trial period will not be long, and it must produce results, convincing and gratifying results. The banks must disgorge their accumulated deposits. Business must put the nation to work. Within a year millions of persons now idle must be earning again.

The President knows that the government can put the nation to work by a vast spending program of its own. It could do so this winter. If the banks did not cooperate in supplying the funds, Congress would give the Administration any set-up of government banking it asked; for the new Congress will be no less unfriendly to the banking interests than the old. There are at least two ways to spend money—on a nation-wide housing campaign, or on a complete modernization of the railroads.

But the time for such a campaign has not come. The new housing proposals to be laid before Congress are not on a scale to put millions to work. They are perhaps to be considered as a beginning which could be vastly amplified in a later emergency. But these vast amplifications would end in fairly fundamental change in the relations between business and the state. They would seriously diminish the future of private enterprise in America. For such changes the President has no mandate. He has not even the mandate of popular pressure to put an end to unemployment. As yet the country believes in private business and in its ability to bring America back to former standards of living.

But the situation in America is grave. The second year of the Roosevelt Administration is more than half gone, and at least eight million persons are still unemployed, in addition to millions of others half-occupied on made jobs, and business is bumping along at a production level of 73 compared with not very prosperous times ten years ago. The oncoming winter will see a rapid rise of the numbers on relief, and it will mean for many who do not reach relief stations a further sinking of living standards. The horde of the disaffected is slowly growing. By another year at the same rate it will be a decisive majority of the whole country.

The Administration, it must be repeated, can change all this. It can put the unemployed to work. But it does not feel warranted in taking the drastic measures necessary to this end until the public demands it. So it is giving business a trial, perhaps its last trial. And if by next year business has not functioned, it knows the public will support what measures are needed to put an end to the misery of the depression. The nation must be allowed to live, and if its business men cannot give it life the state will.

This is the background against which the present friendliness with big business is to be understood. The President is trying to exploit, quite legitimately, his position as the real

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hope of private enterprise in America. He can tell business men that he stands between them and the left. He can truthfully say that Congress, when it meets, will want to go much farther in the direction of financial experiments than he.

One by one he can take up their demands. They ask for the restoration of a price economy; they are now to have it, with a few modifications, in the new administration of the NRA. They ask for the guaranty of the profit system; he has only to laugh for he never believed in anything else. They can ask for a balanced budget; and he can say that it is impossible to abandon relief, impossible for him or for anyone else in his place. They can ask for monetary stability; and he can point to the English pound, which is pegged to nothing at all, the very apotheosis of instability, without disaster to British business. In comparison the dollar is steady as a rock, and only the power of the President to reduce its gold content causes any doubt at all. Then they can ask him to promise not to write down the dollar to fifty cents; and he can look astonished and say: "What, with the pound completely unpegged? Shall I surrender what little elbow room we have in protecting the American economy? I have no intention of reducing the value of the dollar, but I have still less of binding myself."

One can fairly plausibly reconstruct these conversations without an ear at the key-hole. It is only when one tries to conjecture what the President is saying about labor that uncertainty arises. For business men must be telling the President that they cannot function if the closed shop is coming, since it is going to increase wages at a time when lower wages may be essential to recovery. Friends of the President refuse to admit that he is backing down on collective bargaining, but the test will come first of all in the Houde case. Attorney-General Cummings announced that prosecution would be dropped, as the case could not be made to "stick" in court. Chairman Garrison of the Labor Relations Board at once offered to supply new evidence, and the Department of Justice has agreed to consider it.

The trial period for business is being called a "swing to the right." If the concessions to business include the surrender of collective bargaining, the description will be accurate. For collective bargaining is one of the key doctrines of the New Deal, and without it the President will have put business in the saddle through the codes, and will have upset what little balance there was between capital and labor. But if the President is not receding on this issue, the present phase is not a swing to the right. It is a clarification of the true position of the Administration. It stands where it always has stood; it is a left-center government. The President is reported to be saying that the opposition now really lies to the left, and that he is the bulwark against wild experimentation. But he is not promising that next year, failing the fruitful cooperation of business this winter, he will not himself lead to the left, for he knows he may have to. This winter he is "preparing the record." He is giving business its chance. Next year, if need be, he can point to it if the government itself has to put the unemployed to work.

The President's press conferences have been called the most effective sounding-board in the world. Recently the President used this sounding-board to make an important statement on raising prices. He did it artfully, in the best manner of extemporization, and the correspondents appreciated that they were hearing something of a significance belied by its manner. Much of a correspondent's talent is his intuitive sense of what lies behind an uninterpreted remark.

But this time a coincidence got in the way of a clear understanding of what the President meant. For on the next day Professor Warren, father of the gold policy of last year, appeared at the White House for a meal with the President. And the same day Senator Bulkley of the Senate Banking Committee, coming from an interview with him, made the statement that there was no certainty that the dollar would not be devalued farther.

The correspondents naturally inferred that the three pieces of news fitted together. Prices were to be raised; Warren was back in the picture; the dollar was to be devalued. Some monetary experiments must be in the offing. This coming just as the President was trying to reassure business, the sounding-board gave a most unwelcome noise. But it was only coincidence. Professor Warren had asked to see the President to tell him of his travels in Europe and could hardly be denied. Senator Bulkley's remarks about devaluation simply meant that the possibility of devaluation will not be surrendered so long as the pound is not pegged. And what the President was saying about prices had nothing to do with monetary experiments.

The message in the talk of price-raising was that the objective of the Administration was no longer to restore the price level of 1926. Whether or not the public has been justified in believing this to be its objective, it no longer is. The President was saying, in effect, that the Administration still wants a rise in prices, and that it believes in a system of prices, but that it no longer is aiming at the 1926 level. This level was anything but utopian or even tolerably just. It included many injustices, and its restoration in toto would restore the injustices. The President was telling this by roundabout to the correspondents, and they would have understood if Professor Warren and Senator Bulkley had not appeared on the scene.

The disappearance of General Johnson leaves the President without the one intimate associate from whom he derived strength. General Johnson was doing a big job of his own, and relieved the President of certain responsibilities. He both spared his master and because of his dynamic personality and implacable loyalty he actually imparted to him some of his own vitality. Now the speculation is who will take his place. The inner circle of advisers—Richberg, Ickes, Hopkins, and Miss Perkins—is already stabilized, and none of its members has quite the qualities to fill the General's place at the White House. Probably Raymond Moley comes as close to doing it as anyone, and the new friendliness to business is in no small measure the fruit of his association with the President. Professor Moley, however, is not in the government, he is not an administrator, he cannot relieve the President of responsibility. In a regime where so much power centers in the executive, as it does in the New Deal, a man like Johnson was a godsend. Vast power could be delegated to him without a strain on his loyalty. Washington will watch closely to see whether the President finds someone to trust as he trusted Johnson. The influence of such a man on his time could be tremendous.

[*Mr. Swing contributes a regular weekly letter from Washington.*]

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Taxation in the New Social State

III. Federal Finance

By WILLIAM WITHERS

IN 1933 and 1934 the government embarked upon a program of extraordinary expenditures designed to bring about recovery. Total expenditures, most of which were listed in the emergency portion of the budget, were increased in three years from four to seven billion dollars annually. Ordinary expenditures were considerably reduced. As a result of growing expenditures and inability to balance the budget, the national debt increased from nineteen billions in 1932 to twenty-seven billions in 1934.

The present Administration's expenditures reveal certain outstanding policies. The government showed itself disposed to ignore the opposition to a large increase in the public debt. Large sums were lent, chiefly through the RFC, to private business, farmers, and home-owners to secure their solvency and prevent deflation. The government thus continued to pursue the previous Administration's policy of debt salvage. Apart from these loans to support business, the emergency expenditures arose mainly from the attempt to spread purchasing power, to provide relief, and to reduce overproduction. Large appropriations were made for public works and relief—policies not acceptable to the previous Administration. Finally, payments for crop restriction became a new and important part of agricultural expenditures.

The federal expenditures have to be judged primarily on the soundness of these policies and on the adequacy of the expenditures to effect them. As to the loans to salvage business and farm debts, it has been asserted that the high capital value of the debt structure maintains high interest charges and thus prevents a reduction of cost in keeping with the reduced demand for commodities during a depression. This is true in any depression, but especially so when in the preceding period of prosperity capital values have been unduly inflated. Maintenance of these values by the payment of the debt service with government funds merely perpetuates existing rigidities in prices and prolongs price maladjustment. It has been argued, on the other hand, that rapid deflation might so destroy confidence and profits as to cause further business recession. The latter view might be accepted if it could be shown that the support of debts was actually increasing the purchasing power of specific groups of consumers, but under the circumstances it is probable that such measures may retard rather than promote recovery.

In the support of "bad" debts the present Administration has turned out to be as great an offender as its predecessor. In the fiscal year 1933, when the Hoover Administration was still largely responsible for expenditures, the loans which were used principally to support the debt structure amounted to only $1,278,000,000, or about 40 per cent of the total RFC outlays. In the succeeding fiscal year, in which the Roosevelt recovery program really got under way, the loans for this purpose amounted to $1,899,000,000, or more than 47 per cent of the total RFC outlays. The policy of tying up large amounts of federal funds in private businesses, especially banks, has therefore been continued in the Roosevelt Administration without any assurance that the conditions leading to their financial difficulties will be eradicated. No fundamental changes in banking or business have been made. The appropriations of the RFC are now used as a revolving fund. The repayments of loans are sufficient to support a large volume of new loans.

The effectiveness of the government's program of public works was extremely limited. Under the Emergency Relief and Construction Act of July, 1932, a total of $1,822,000,000 was assigned to emergency construction. Of this amount $322,000,000 was to be spent for federal emergency construction and $1,500,000,000 was to be lent by the RFC for self-liquidating public works, to local bodies, and to private agencies. When the Roosevelt Administration came in, however, only $6,000,000 had been obligated for federal public works and $63,000,000 for local public works. The federal program was halted by President Roosevelt and part of the funds turned over to the CCC. The PWA began a new program, abandoning the self-liquidating test of eligibility and giving grants as well as loans to the localities. But less than two billions of the $3,300,000,000 appropriation remained for administration by the PWA after special allocations had been made to other emergency agencies. By August 31, 1934, total expenditures amounted only to a little over one billion, of which roughly four-fifths went for federal construction. The program was seriously hampered by legal and financial difficulties in the localities; not enough money has as yet been expended to have any very great effect; the funds are poorly distributed between federal and local projects; and they have little relationship to the stage the depression has reached. The army and navy received more than the States and municipalities combined. In spite of the relative generosity of the PWA appropriations, the program brought to light many obstacles to coordination of federal and State efforts in emergency construction activities. A brief period in which the government sought to make up for these delays by CWA expenditures was prematurely ended when the political and financial consequences began to loom large on the front pages of newspapers.

It is extraordinary that such large amounts have been spent on the army and navy and to support tottering banks and insurance companies by an Administration promising to remember the "forgotten man." That individual should be thankful that relief and CWA expenditures were at least a significant part of the budget for 1934, since it is apparent that the tendency of the price-fixing and monetary phases of the Administration's program is to decrease rather than increase the relative incomes of the farmer and worker. An analysis of expenditures indicates that the government takes much more seriously the support of the debt structure and the raising of prices through the action of NRA codes than the spreading of purchasing power.

The taxes adopted in the summer of 1933 for the emergency program included levies on dividends, capital stock,

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excess profits, gasoline, and beer, and certain nuisance taxes. These were retained, except for the dividends tax and miscellaneous nuisance taxes, with some revisions in the Revenue Act of 1934. Receipts from taxes, although insufficient to balance the budget, are promising. The new taxes, together with liquor and processing taxes, the increase in rates, and the tendency toward business improvement, brought a rise in revenue from about two billion dollars in 1933 to more than three billions in 1934. Receipts from the income tax increased, but the greatest gains came from the miscellaneous internal-revenue taxes and from the processing tax on farm products.

The Revenue Act of 1934 was primarily an attempt to meet the long-neglected question of tax avoidance. The right to file consolidated corporation returns was limited. Exemption was denied to religious or educational organizations which spend large sums on propaganda. A new method of dealing with capital gains and losses was introduced. The rates of the estate tax were increased. Income-tax rates were not raised to any great extent, but the rate structure was changed. The new measures to reduce tax avoidance offer, however, so many technical difficulties in enforcement that a large amount of taxes will probably be avoided for years.

It is probable that the government could have raised rates still higher and obtained still larger receipts, particularly from the income and surtaxes. It is unfortunate that such heavy reliance was placed on internal-revenue taxes, which, through price changes, shift the burden to lower incomes. As for tax avoidance, earlier action on this score, as well as on unjustifiable forms of tax exemption, would have yielded some of the receipts the government now needs.

The exemption of government bonds from the surtax has been criticized for years. Its effect is to permit the wealthy to avoid payment of surtax rates by investment in federal securities, thereby defeating the purpose of progressive taxation, and to promote concentration of debt holdings. The wealthiest taxpayers are the ones who gain most. Moreover, the Treasury ordinarily loses more in revenue than it gains through the lower interest it has to pay on the bonds; and the increase in the debt combined with the increase in the rates of surtaxes will make the government's losses from this source even more serious in the future.

The increases in tax rates have not brought us very far toward the tax levels of Great Britain, France, and other Western nations. It is possible for the United States to support a much higher tax burden, and if the Administration is sincere in its efforts to spread purchasing power it should face the necessity for higher and more progressive taxes. The increase in commodity prices is apparently passing the processing tax on to the consumer, while the farmer gains little in the way of increased prices for his crops.

It is futile to argue that the tax system can be a powerful agency of social control when realities show that it cannot. Business and banking will not permit the tax system to be such an instrument. Too great changes in the direction of progressive taxation, assuming that they were politically feasible, would be neutralized by tax avoidance or by increased prices. Since this is the case, the best we can expect is a more balanced tax structure, one well adapted to different levels of income, so that it would not discourage saving or reduce purchasing power. This would be in part achieved through somewhat higher income-tax rates and the maintenance of these rates after the depression ends, so that receipts from this source can be used to pay off part of the debt. But it would scarcely be more than a neutral influence in the flux of economic forces.

Great increases in the public debt are associated with rising prices. It has therefore been urged recently that higher taxes be levied in order to reduce the amount of public borrowing and thus avoid, to that extent, the danger of inflation. But so far the public debt has apparently not been responsible for any considerable inflation, and it is erroneous to expect that its increase, taken by itself, will cause inflation. It would have such an effect only if the expenditures for which the debt was incurred passed into general circulation and constituted an active net addition to the total purchasing power. An analysis of the expenditures has shown us that a great part of them were for the purpose of salvaging debts. To the extent that this occurred, the increase in expenditures has not caused and will not be likely in the near future to cause any serious inflation. But if liquidation of these debts begins, it may put government loans into circulation and thus increase the active purchasing media. Thus the extent to which increased expenditures will cause inflation depends in part upon whether or not widespread foreclosure of these debts occurs before business revives.

Expenditures made for other purposes have not as yet so increased purchasing power as to cause a marked rise in prices. It is possible, of course, that if the depression continues much longer the government will find it difficult to float from four to eight billions more of public debt without resorting to its war practices. In that case banks and individuals will be encouraged to borrow to purchase government bonds, and these bonds will be used as collateral for such loans. In this fashion total purchasing power will be still further increased, with the result that a considerable rise in prices may take place. It may be granted therefore that if the government continues large expenditures, it would be advisable for it to increase taxes to some extent if it wishes to avoid this sort of inflation.

One great danger that lurks in the public debt relates to stock-market speculation. Prior to the depression the existence of a large public debt, with its credit potentialities, encouraged the inflation of stock values. Adequate banking laws could reduce this danger. But it should be remembered that one of the best weapons against stock inflation is an increase in the level of taxation upon the return of prosperity and the devotion of large surpluses to debt retirement.

A popular method of emphasizing the burden of the present government debt is to point out that it has now exceeded the post-war high point. The burden is not, however, unduly heavy. England is now supporting a much higher debt, relative to its wealth and population, than is the United States. The inhibiting effect of the large debt upon banking and business expansion is of more immediate concern. Not only do the large debt holdings by banks seem to restrict lending to private business, but they build up in the assets of the banks a very rigid form of loans which could not be liquidated rapidly without embarrassing the government. Banking theorists who believe that one of the great weaknesses of the American banking system lies in the lack of liquidity of bank loans see here one of the more rigid elements in the banks' assets. It is possible that the government should make a definite effort, in case it finds it necessary to borrow further,

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to go to the people and obtain a wide distribution of debt holdings, thus relieving the banks of the necessity of tying up their assets in government bonds.

There have been numerous warnings that more borrowing will induce a declining government bond market or will force the Treasury to borrow at extremely high rates of interest. Last spring the government faced the problem of refinancing about one billion dollars of the Fourth Liberty Loan, bearing 4½ per cent interest. The program was carried out, and refunding has been accomplished at lower rates of interest. The limit is apparently not yet reached; there has been no marked or consistent tendency for the price of government bonds to fall. During the same period the Treasury has been alert to the dangers of an excessive amount of floating debt, and has been converting its short-term into intermediate debt. In view of the enormous maturities of old debt which fell due after the present Administration took office, the Treasury's management of its borrowing program has on the whole been successful.

It is possible that if a strong movement against public borrowing had developed in the past two years the tendency would have been to place taxes on low incomes, as has been done frequently by the States. Whether or not this would have been desirable depends, of course, upon one's theories of the causes of depressions. But certainly to place high taxes on low incomes would be inconsistent with the theory of the Administration that the depression is due in part to maldistribution of purchasing power.

Two lines of policy already indicated by the Administration contain sound practice for the future—the reduction of appropriations for RFC loans to business, and the reduction of the floating debt. When more prosperous times return, nothing should hinder the effort to retire the debt as soon as the budget is balanced. Tax rates and the degree of progression in the tax system should be increased. Finally, two great sources of lost taxes—tax exemption and tax avoidance—have not yet been adequately dealt with by Congress.

[*This is the third of a series of ten articles on taxation, planned and edited by Professor Paul Studenski. The fourth, State Finance, by M. Slade Kendrick, will appear next week.*]

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In the Driftway

THE Drifter's young friends are discovering America. They have spent their first thirty years, or perhaps somewhat less, in the caverns of New York City. When they took a particularly long trip it was to the end of the subway line, where they found themselves at the Zoo. In the summer they went to the shore of Long Island Sound, with other urbanites like themselves, or they simply stayed in town because "New York is such fun in the summer." Or merely because they did not know anywhere else to go. (Lest it appear that all the Drifter's friends are members of the upper middle class, he hastens to say that plenty of them remain in New York for financial reasons!) But all of them had one thing in common: the country made them uncomfortable. Too quiet, they said, too big, too full of animals and plants. And of course the members of the human race who lived elsewhere than in New York City were to be regarded with kindly pity, because it was obvious that anybody who could live in town would. Look at the advantages!

* * * * *

ONE by one these poor blinking city owls are taking trips. Some of them go down to the coalfields of Pennsylvania and West Virginia; some of them get into an old car and drive to the Coast; some of them tour New England, stopping not at the large hotels in the big towns but at the frame dwellings with a "Tourists" sign out on the front lawn. Some of them are even going South and are struggling with that foreign country below the Mason and Dixon line that no Northerner ever quite understands. And when they return to the metropolis they throw out their hands and shout their discoveries. "America is a wonderful country!" they cry. "I learned to talk to garage men; garage men are the most interesting people in the world!" "America is so big and so grand; such variety, such wisdom, such geography, such human nature; so many people and all different!"

* * * * *

TO the Drifter, whose discovery of the grandeur of America came much earlier, these simple-hearted enthusiasms would grow a little tiresome if he were not generally grateful for the spread of human knowledge in whatever direction it manifests itself. Let New York discover the hinterland if it will. Like the man biting the dog, this is news of the first water. And if enough New Yorkers learn to talk to garage men, perhaps the garage men, in turn, will learn that New Yorkers aren't so bad either. The race of brash, boasting, and cocksure humans which is popularly thought to inhabit Manhattan does not really live there at all. Get one of them in a corner and treat him kindly and he turns out to be rather a decent fellow. And contrary to popular superstition, New York is a feverish and unsatisfying place to visit but quite a nice place to live in, where almost everybody minds his own business and where Live and Let Live might very well be inscribed on the local escutcheon. In other words, New York is not a separate country but an indigenous and rather unsurprising part of the United States. And the United States is not a foreign country either, but

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that native land to which New Yorkers, whether they like it or not, belong. The Drifter is glad that more and more New Yorkers are learning to like it.

THE DRIFTER

Correspondence

Miss Dawson Is Fired

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

The discharge of Miss Sidonia Dawson, an experienced relief worker, from her position as supervisory aide at Precinct 18, Manhattan, of the Home Relief Bureau, is not only an issue in relief circles but one that is of importance to the people of the entire city, for it affects the whole relationship between the Home Relief Bureau staff and the 200,000 families on relief.

The facts, briefly stated, are these: On Thursday, September 27, a group of unemployed called on the Home Relief Bureau at 519 West Forty-fourth Street and asked to see the supervisor, Miss Florence Elsey, to ask her to redress certain grievances. The chief receptionist, Samuel Harmartuk, met the delegation, asked them to wait, and then went for the supervisor. While Mr. Harmartuk was gone, a group of policemen led by Patrolman Gottlieb, local officer stationed at the bureau, charged the group waiting inside the bureau offices. They seized the spokesman of the group, twenty-year-old Barney Oster, and began to beat him unmercifully. Miss Dawson, a supervisory aide standing nearby, called on the police to stop.

This courageous protest of Miss Dawson's against police brutality was followed the next day by a statement distributed within the precinct by the Grievance Committee of the Home Relief Bureau Employees' Association, voicing their emphatic protest against this unprovoked police attack. The statement further suggested that if the supervisor was responsible for the calling of the police, she be removed, and a complete investigation of this action be made. Later a meeting, at which Miss Dawson spoke, was held in front of Home Relief Director Corsi's office protesting against the police attack in Precinct 18.

On Thursday, October 4, Miss Dawson was discharged with a letter of notification signed by Mildred Gordon, assistant director, Borough of Manhattan, of the Home Relief Bureau, which stated that Miss Dawson, an admittedly competent worker, was discharged "because of activities inside and outside of the precinct." Miss Dawson has been working in the bureau for almost three years, and not even the administration can attack her work on grounds of incompetency. Her subordinates are now demanding her reinstatement.

This discharge of Miss Dawson, an active member of the Home Relief Bureau Employees' Association, is, we submit, a shameless indorsement of police brutality and foreshadows other attacks on the organization of the employees. It is, furthermore, an attack on the constitutional rights of the association. For these reasons the association is determinedly waging a campaign for the reinstatement of Miss Dawson.

New York, October 10 B. L. RIBACK, president,
Home Relief Bureau Employees' Association.

Mr. Hodson Explains

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

The letter of October 10 signed by B. L. Riback, president of the Home Relief Bureau Employees' Association, raises two questions, which I will deal with separately.

1. It asserts that Miss Sidonia Dawson was discharged because she had protested against alleged police brutality on September 27, and it implies further that her dismissal was influenced because of her membership in the Home Relief Bureau Employees' Association. Neither of these statements is true. She was discharged because of her deliberate misrepresentation of the facts in regard to the disturbance of September 27, in a public speech on the street in front of the offices of the Home Relief Bureau.

This administration has taken a liberal and sympathetic attitude toward its employees and others who wish to make complaint or criticisms. There are proper channels within the organization through which the suggestions of the employees are received and acted upon. It is obviously destructive of the morale of the entire organization to have our employees, especially those in an executive position, calling mass-meetings on public streets to denounce those who are charged with the legal responsibility for carrying on the relief program. It is even worse when that denunciation is presented in an unfair manner.

2. Now as to the events that occurred at the Home Relief Bureau precinct on September 27. The facts as reported to me by the officials of the Home Relief Bureau and by the police are as follows: A group of fifteen members of an unemployed council came to the precinct and insisted upon seeing the supervisor. She was busy at the time of their arrival with a very serious matter which needed immediate adjustment. The supervisor sent word to this protesting group of fifteen that she would attend to the matter which they had in mind as soon as she had finished the work in hand. The group refused to wait and rushed up the stairs into the reception room, creating great disorder. Patrolman Gottlieb, who is referred to in the communication, made every effort to persuade them against the violent tactics which they were pursuing, but without result. They refused to desist and reinforcements had to be called from the nearest police precinct. Three additional policemen came, and again an effort was made to persuade the group to disperse peaceably and again they refused. Thereupon the policemen, without any display of force other than what was necessary, attempted to push the group back. At this point Barney Oster, who is referred to in the communication as being twenty years of age but who is in reality twenty-five, struck the officer in the face with his clenched fist. Up to this point no one of the policemen had struck a blow either with his fist or with any instrument. From that time on a general melee resulted and blows were struck on both sides, but no serious physical damage was done to anyone.

This department has consistently taken the position that the Police Department should not exercise any more force than is necessary to preserve order and never should attack citizens who come to protest. However, if the great mass of unemployed people in this city are to receive attention, the work of the Home Relief bureaus must be carried on in an orderly and peaceable way. It is obvious that when the police are called upon to preserve order they will have to meet force with force, if the protestants insist upon that method of procedure. This is exactly what happened on September 27 and it is typical of other incidents in which certain protesting groups have deliberately resorted to force in order to create a general disturbance.

The great mass of the unemployed on the Home Relief Bureau rolls are conscious of the fact that we are doing everything in our power to provide for them as intelligently and humanely as possible. A small minority are intent upon creating disorder at every possible turn. The actions of this group from time to time compel us to use force in order to enable our staff to carry on their work and to be free of the threats and intimidation which are hurled at them by these irresponsible persons.

WILLIAM HODSON, Commissioner

New York, October 13

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Labor and Industry

Scab City, New Jersey

By ALFRED H. HIRSCH

"OUR law is the night stick and we use it." I quote Mayor Frank Hague, czar of Jersey City and Democratic boss of New Jersey, who is reputed to be a multimillionaire maintaining a duplex apartment in Jersey City's most fashionable residential building, the Duncan Apartments, and a summer home at Deal Beach, and making frequent trips to Florida and abroad although, as far as is known, he has never earned more than $8,000 a year as mayor. His statement, in an exclusive interview printed in the Newark *Sunday Call* of October 5, 1933, continues: "There are no gangs who use Jersey City as a hideout or headquarters, because all suspicious characters are apprehended wherever they are seen, in automobiles, trains, or on the street." What these words meant I discovered when I spent three days as a guest of his city in the Seventh Precinct jail. I was watching from a small distance when William Schwartz, a member of the Furniture Workers' Industrial Union, started to picket outside the Miller Parlor Furniture Company, carrying a sign which urged employees to join the union. Seeing a police officer speak to Schwartz, I crossed the street. I asked the officer some questions. Schwartz was arrested. So was I.

Inside the jail I understood the significance of the statement that "all suspicious characters are apprehended wherever they are seen, in automobiles, trains, or on the street." During the three hours a day spent outside the cells in a narrow corridor where the prisoners are told to "exercise" I spoke to most of the thirty or forty prisoners. Unlike me, most of the men were ignorant of the charge against them. Schwartz and I were charged with disorderly conduct, a misdemeanor, but we were fingerprinted like criminals.

One man, a Swede who had been looking for a job and had asked an officer for directions, was taken to the courtroom on Thursday, June 28, only to have his case postponed until July 5. Bail may have been set but he failed to mention it to me—he had no way of getting it. I was in court on July 5 and as I entered a man said, "Hello." It was the Swede. He had been discharged. He borrowed ten cents from me to get out of the city.

Leon Wilson, a young Negro, had been picked up as he was waiting for a street car on Sunday, June 25, at 7:45 p.m. He had shown the patrolman his work card indicating that he was employed as a cleaner in the Pennsylvania Station, New York, and that he had worked there earlier that day. He explained to the officer that he had come over to Jersey City to visit a friend. Wilson had been allowed to make one telephone call since his arrest; having failed to reach his employer, who was out, he was not permitted to call again. When I left the jail on Friday, June 29, to be transferred to the county jail, Wilson was still locked up awaiting trial. Bail of $1,500 had been set—Wilson earns $15 a week.

The Miller Parlor Furniture Company, of 261 Orient Avenue, Jersey City, was formed by the merger of two former Brooklyn firms, the Maujer Parlor Frame Company and the Junius Parlor Frame Company. Both had unexpired labor contracts with the left-wing Furniture Workers' Industrial Union in Brooklyn, which they broke upon moving to Jersey City. It is reported that they had been invited to move by Mayor Hague, who had assured them immunity from labor troubles. Jersey City was to benefit through taxes and "personal property" assessments, which in the case of a business house are levied principally on stock kept in storage. The furniture company, employing seventy men, was to save more than $1,000 a week by reducing the average pay from $35 to $19. After the removal from Brooklyn old employees received cards inviting them to work in the Jersey City plant. Upon arrival they were told to "forget about the union." They called a strike and picketing began in June. The union was reinforced by representatives of the National Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners and the American Civil Liberties Union.

Pickets were arrested, observers were detained and in some cases arrested, and in one case, that of the writer, an observer was arrested, tried, and convicted. Thirty-day sentences were meted out indiscriminately without regard to the evidence. In no instance were the pickets charged with peaceful picketing, which is legal in the State of New Jersey. Charges were based on a State disorderly-persons act, the provisions of which are extremely flexible but which nevertheless had no application.

In my own case, the officer who had told me at the time of the arrests that he was acting "under Mr. Miller's orders" (the owner of the plant), denied when testifying that he had spoken to me except to tell me that I was under arrest. He testified that a crowd of fifty had collected—it really consisted of eight or ten children with three or four curious adults—and went so far as to describe the color of two non-existent baby carriages whose passage was "interfered with." Under the able questioning of A. J. Isserman, defense counsel, the officer contradicted himself several times, but this had no effect on Police Judge William J. McGovern, a Hague appointee who has never passed his bar examinations. Prosecutor Hansen's only question to me was: "Have you ever been convicted before?" The cases of all fourteen convicted defendants are being appealed.

Nothing less than the right to picket is involved. Two A. F. of L. locals, more timid than the Furniture Workers' Industrial Union, have called off strikes because this right was denied them. One of these, the Journeymen Barbers' International Union of America, Local 362, called off a strike because a delegation of union members who called on Director of Public Safety (Police Commissioner) Thomas J. Wolfe learned that "no picketing would be allowed." A strike of the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butchers Workmen of North America, Local 29, against the Nagel Packing Company in Jersey City was ended because "the men were not allowed to picket."

The attitude of the Jersey City administration, including the police and the lower courts, constitutes an attack on wage scales in New York City as well as in Jersey City,

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since the firms of both cities must compete in the same markets. It is a challenge to the right of labor to organize, and consequently to strike, not only in New Jersey but by extension throughout the country. If it is successful in Jersey City, other communities will not be slow to follow suit. Other "runaway shops" have already sprung up in Jersey City, among them the Restful Slipper Company, the General Upholstery Company, and the Metro Art, Inc. Firms have also removed under similar conditions to other towns in New Jersey, such as Newark, Perth Amboy, Elizabeth, and Union City. And it is evident that Jersey City employers feel themselves exempt from the decisions of the National Labor Board, which has recently upheld the Furniture Workers' Industrial Union in ordering that all former employees must be taken back on a union wage scale in the Miller plant. Miller has ignored the order.

In spite of Jersey City's procedure in making arrests and obtaining convictions, Director of Public Safety Wolfe states that "the truth is that the police of Jersey City are not and never were hostile to union labor." He adds that the police "protect" labor. How this is accomplished can be seen in the case of the National Hotel and Restaurant Employees' Organization, Local 1, an independent union. Police entered its headquarters on January 27 asking for Harris Cleron, the organizer. On February 6 two detectives interrupted an executive-committee meeting to question all those present, and on the following day they closed the union headquarters. Two and a half weeks later, on February 24, a policeman and a detective entered a restaurant at 12 Journal Square from which the union had rented a back room as headquarters. They knew they would find Cleron there. Before his eyes they took away the restaurant owner's license. Cleron was forced to leave town, and previous to a meeting of the union on March 2 the members were instructed by the police to expel Cleron and elect a new organizer. The union has since ceased to exist. When I saw Cleron recently in Newark, he said: "In Jersey City a union can exist only if it supports Hague."

An analysis of Hague's attacks on "racketeer" unions best reveals his attitude toward labor. The leaders of these unions had grown rich and powerful. Wages were comparatively high; taxes had become so high that such firms as the P. Lorillard Company, employing thousands of tobacco workers, moved from Jersey City. Bountiful patronage in the form of hundreds on its pay roll, some of whom did not even come to Jersey City to collect their checks but received them by mail, coupled with failure to collect taxes, brought the city close to bankruptcy. An about-face on the labor front was necessary: wages had to go down, industry must be brought back.

Theodore Brandle, former ruler of the International Association of Bridge, Structural, and Ornamental Iron Workers of Hudson and Bergen Counties, was for years a friend of Mayor Hague's and shared prosperity with him. By 1931 Brandle's dictatorial methods in his alleged labor union had brought him into such complete disrepute among the rank and file that he became a political menace to Hague. No longer a colleague of Hague's, he was openly proclaiming himself a despot on his own throne. Hague, confronted by his Frankenstein, could not destroy him, but he did have to break with him openly. The McClintic Marshall Company was awarded the contract for the three-mile diagonal bridge, now known as the Pulaski Skyway, which forms part of the elevated highway passing through Jersey City and Newark and running into the main road to Philadelphia, at a reported figure of $20,000,000. The firm furnished a cash bond, contrary to the usual procedure whereby bonds were posted through Brandle, who got a commission. Brandle called a strike and the State Highway Commmission continued the work with non-union labor. On February 27, 1932, Thomas Harrison and other scabs were attacked while riding to work in a car. Harrison died two days later.

The trials came up on December 6 and in the *Jersey Journal* for that day appeared the following revealing statement: "No arrests were made in the case until more than a week after the murder. *Then Mayor Hague sent out the word that he had broken with Brandle and the police started rounding up Brandle's pickets in their investigation.*"

The election was only a few months off and it was an auspicious moment to launch an attack on the union racketeers. Mayor Hague became the champion of the people. Brandle's downfall appeared imminent, but the defendants were all acquitted on December 9, 1932.

The acquittals met with a storm of criticism, however, threatening Hague's very regime. On January 18, 1934, Brandle was driven out of the union. Judge John H. Lenehan, a solid Hague man, was named as receiver with a sizable fee. I spoke recently to a member of Local 45 of the Iron Union. He said: "The union is broken. Nothing in the treasury, and three hundred members where we used to have over a thousand."

This is but one example of Mayor Hague's union-smashing campaign. In 1933 a group of cleaners and dyers wished to join Local 617 of the Teamsters' Union. The A. F. of L., built up of craft unions and at that time opposed to vertical, or industrial, unions voted against their admission. Jeremiah Buckley, head of Teamsters' Local 617, proceeded to set up separate funds and books for the cleaners and dyers with the intention of applying for a charter for them as soon as the size of the membership allowed. Whether his intentions were straightforward or not is irrelevant as the following facts will show. Buckley was arrested on June 30, 1933, charged with "obtaining money under false pretenses." Bail was set at $80,000, finally reduced to $15,000, and he was freed on bond. Meanwhile receivership actions were brought against Locals 560 and 641 of the Teamsters' Union. The latter was on strike at the time, or rather its members had been locked out by the mason-material dealers on the question of wages. For eleven months beginning in January, 1933, Mayor Hague's Jersey City police escorted the trucks, manned by scabs.

Finally an agreement was reached whereby receivership proceedings against Locals 560 and 641 were to be dropped on condition that Buckley and the other officers of Local 617 were ousted. This was promptly done, and, by coincidence, Judge John H. Lenehan was again named receiver. He has been in charge of the local since December, 1933. The International refuses to recognize him and consequently no dues stamps are sent to the local, which in turn makes no dues payments. The local is on the verge of expulsion.

Nor is that the end. On December 16, 1933, Maxwell Bublitz, business manager of Local 164 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, was removed from his position, and Judge John H. Lenehan became receiver. The

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receivership was based on the alleged false use of relief funds totaling about $3,000 (the sum first mentioned was $30,000). Bublitz claimed that the relief funds had been set up following the passage of an amendment to the by-laws of the local to that effect. When the amendment was declared unconstitutional, Bublitz had the money deposited with the general funds of the union.

This clean-up of racketeers was followed by a general anti-union drive in an effort to bring business back to Jersey City by making it attractive to all exponents of the "open shop." Frank Hague is himself a member of the Teamsters' Union, although he is said to have served as a strike-breaker in 1912. Next year he became one of the five city commissioners of Jersey City and four years later, in 1917, the mayor. He has reigned continually since.

He embarked for a vacation trip to South America and Europe on June 30, following his strenuous barn-storming tour of New Jersey on behalf of his fellow-Democrats Harry Moore and William L. Dill, nominees for United States Senator and Governor respectively. The rumor persists that Hague is supporting Moore with the understanding that Moore, when elected, will resign, and that the new Governor, Dill, whom Hague is also supporting, will fill the vacancy by appointing Hague to the United States Senate. Less than two weeks after his departure the ban on peaceful picketing was lifted by order of Acting Mayor Arthur Potterton. This change in policy is due to two factors: the public interest aroused in the Miller Company case and the desire to spike the guns of New Jersey Republicans who are making political capital out of Mayor Hague's stand as a "friend of labor."

Furthermore, on July 23, a temporary injunction granted on June 25 to the Miller Parlor Furniture Company by Vice-Chancellor Charles M. Egan, enjoining picketing of the plant, was vacated by the federal courts on the basis of the Norris-La Guardia Anti-Injunction Act. This was reaffirmed on September 10 when United States District Judge Avis denied the motion of the Miller Company for a preliminary injunction.

Meanwhile the Restful Slipper Company, formerly of Brooklyn, has moved to Jersey City and refused to renew its contract with the independent United Shoe and Leather Workers' Union. A temporary injunction enjoining the union from picketing and even from communicating any information about the strike was granted by Vice-Chancellor Charles M. Egan on September 12, as noted in a recent issue of *The Nation*. However, on September 21 picketing was carried on by representatives of the American Civil Liberties Union and the National Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners. Police were present but no arrests were made. And on September 27, at a hearing held to decide whether the injunction should be made permanent, Vice-Chancellor Egan greatly modified his former ruling and stated that his views on labor disputes had recently been "broadened and enlarged."

The cases of the Miller Parlor Furniture Company pickets are still to be appealed. The battle is not won but Mayor Hague has not yet broken the backs of the unions which are willing to fight him.

[*This is the first of two articles on the labor policies of Mayor Hague and Jersey City. The second will appear next week.*]

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Jules Romains's Progress

The Proud and The Meek. By Jules Romains. Translated by Warre B. Wells. Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.

TOWARD the close of the present volume, which is the third in the long series of novels in which Jules Romains is attempting to reconstruct the whole of French civilization of his time, the young and tender-hearted Abbé Jeanne arrives at a formulation of his private or "unofficial" philosophy. His conclusion is that human society, when all is said and done, can be reduced to a very simple dichotomy. There are, on the one side, the humble and the meek; on the other, the proud—those who are haughty and overweening "in the imagination of their hearts." According to the Abbé, this division has nothing to do with any effort to split up society into different social classes. The humble are sometimes to be found among the rich and the proud among the poor. "Social condition was not the origin of the difference. . . . It might simply be the sign of that difference, or mark where it had momentarily come to a head." The Abbé is aware that his view amounts to a kind of Manicheism; but of the feelings only, not of the intellect.

On this very simple schematization of mankind Romains has chosen to base the scheme of this third section of his work, which, like the earlier sections, is made up of two distinct parts. The first part deals exclusively with those characters in the work who illustrate most conspicuously those traits which the Abbé ascribes to the proud—"an appetite for power, or manifestations of power; a craving for conquest and possession." It traces out, that is to say, the progress of the liaison between the arrogant and unscrupulous Sammécaud and the morally invertebrate Madame de Champcenais. A great many chapters are devoted to the detailed explanation of Havercamp's business operations, and it becomes more certain that the role of this unknown but energetic opportunist in the field of Paris real estate is to be that of pre-war "big business man," American model. Gurau, whose self-intoxication is of a different order, goes farther along the path of political compromise when he hires a young secretary to keep his conscience for him. The worldly young Abbé Mionnet attracts the interest of the right people and is on his way to becoming something more important than just another parish priest. And Quinette enjoys a little more of his peculiar kind of power when he toys with the idea of love in the company of the young musical composer who will probably be his next victim. It is clear that in placing such people as Havercamp and Quinette in this first half of the volume Romains is illustrating the Abbé Jeanne's contention that the proud are not always the rich. Of all the characters in this part Havercamp alone is motivated by any material object, and even for him money is not so much the source as the symbol of power.

In "The Meek" we cross the bridge into the world of the pensive, the lovely, the compassionate—the kingdom of Christ. Little Louis Bastide is bought a new pair of tan shoes, which only serve to make him feel very guilty, especially since his father, a little later on, loses his job in the factory. A walk down one of the more squalid streets in the city suddenly turns the gentle Jerphanion into a revolutionist and he gets into communication with a kindred spirit, the schoolmaster Clanricard. The Abbé Jeanne visits an abandoned mother in a hovel outside the fortifications and has his clairvoyant vision of the double structure of society. A few new characters are introduced: Madame Camille, the vendor of contraceptive preparations, to whom Madame de Champcenais is forced to have recourse; Stephen Bartlett, an English newspaperman, who is presented entirely through the travel diary in which he records his first impression of Paris; and Madame Yvoy, the wife of Bastide's employer, who rebuffs little Louis brutally when he makes a plea for his father's reinstatement. And again it is to be noted—in his treatment of Bastide, who is too proud to accept a job that looks too much like charity, and of Madame Yvoy, who is afraid to allow her feelings to take precedence over her rights—that Romains is stressing the lack of correspondence between the two methods of dividing up society, the economic and the spiritual or emotional.

Whether the dichotomy which Romains follows in this particular volume represents any final and definitive social philosophy of his own is, of course, very much in question. The philosophy is, after all, expressed through the mind of a single character and does not necessarily possess any more auctorial authority than the belief of Jerphanion, toward the close of the book, in the immediate necessity of a social revolution. The notion of the proud and the meek may be, therefore, only a notion, one of the many incidental ideas or conceits possible in a work of this length, which Romains here uses as a kind of structural device. Or it may simply be a rather homely and specific expression of some broader and more general philosophical attitude which will emerge more clearly in the later volumes of the series. Certainly it seems unlikely that a writer like Romains, who is capable of the most abstract statement of his ideas, will be content to leave us with such an emotive and even sentimental set of terms. As for the problem of Romains's political identification, which has occupied certain of his American critics, there is nothing in the present section, any more than in the earlier sections, to justify the somewhat hysterical cry of fascist. The truth is that it is much too early to point with certitude to any one of the several political attitudes represented in the work as being unmistakably that of Romains himself. It has been one of the triumphs of "Men of Good-Will" so far that it has presented the different social levels with their corresponding points of view so exclusively in terms of individual character that no explicit point of view on the part of the author has been necessary. Between Gurau's kind of radicalism and Jerphanion's, between Sammécaud's values and those of Clanricard, there can be no question of choice; and in his characterization of these people Romains has relieved himself of the necessity of any judgment.

In view of the extravagant praise which the opening sections of the work have received in this country, however, it may not be too early to venture some very general estimate of Romains's powers as a novelist, some opinion concerning the more strictly literary qualities of his work. Unquestionably, the scale of his project is impressive; and its scale has been perhaps most responsible for the extraordinary claims that have been made, in advance, for his work. But scale in itself is not a sufficient guaranty of the excellence of a work of fiction. We need only recall the Rougon-Macquart cycle of Zola and the more recent prodigies of John Dos Passos. It is well, therefore, to keep in mind Gertrude Stein's observation that a masterpiece does not always look like a masterpiece. A masterpiece on the same plane with the major works of Proust, Joyce, and Mann "Men of Good-Will" has not so far given evidence of becoming. Despite his technical virtuosity, his familiarity with the most diverse social backgrounds, and the maturity of his point of view, Romains has a mind which, for want of a better description, can only be called commonplace. As an analyst of the sentiment of love (in Wazemmes, Havercamp, Sammécaud), he is neither as subtle nor as profound as Proust; he belongs, as a matter of fact, somewhere between Proust and the last popular writer in the yellow-back French tradition. The whole treatment of

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Quinette's psychology and crime is also on a level somewhere between Dostoevski and Edgar Wallace. A close inspection of Romains's style would perhaps best reveal the quality of relaxed intellectual tension which marks his writing and which keeps him from becoming a master of the first order.

At the same time "Men of Good-Will" continues to be the most absorbing experiment in the field of fiction being made anywhere in the world at present. The pervasive weakness just pointed out does not in actuality prevent it from supplying a solider and more continuous kind of interest than any number of works which reveal a greater depth, intensity, and brilliance. If it were not too much of a paradox, one might say that its very lack of intensity becomes a virtue for a novel-reading public that has been provided with too rich a psychological fare for at least a generation. It marks a new period for the novel, a period of recovered composure, in which the novelist can roll up his sleeves and quietly embark on mighty projects.

WILLIAM TROY

Without Benefit of Peasantry

American Ballads and Folk Songs. Collected and Compiled by John A. Lomax and Alan Lomax. The Macmillan Company. $5.

THE elder and younger Lomaxes—for since the publication of John Lomax's "Cowboy Songs" in 1910 a new generation has risen into the ranks of American ballad collectors—begin their introduction to the present omnibus with a startling quotation from an Oxford professor of music who lectured recently at Bryn Mawr. "Since America has no peasant class," the professor said, "there are, of course, no American folk songs."

If the professor is ever pressed to defend his utterance he will have to prove, granting his initial premise to have been correct, either that we really do have no peasantry or that we really have produced no folk songs. In the first case he might be driven to a new definition of his term; and in the second case he would have to take account of the fact that the United States, judging by what has happened since 1910 or thereabouts, *seems* to be the richest country on record. The Lomaxes point out that a hundred collections of what purport to be American ballads and folk songs have been published during the quarter-century in question; that there are three hundred known versions of "Frankie and Albert"; that someone is hoarding five hundred stanzas of "Mademoiselle of Armentières"; and that "The Old Chisholm Trail" runs to a full thousand stanzas.

It would appear that we had the folk songs, then, and so of necessity the folk to produce them, peasant or otherwise. The only trouble with the word peasant is that it is not American, any more for that matter than the word folk is. The cowboy is not a peasant, though he knows hundreds of songs whose words and tunes fit any definition of popular art that can be made. The Negro in a work gang is not a peasant, though his ability, say the Lomaxes, "to portray an emotional situation or to picture an incident in a few graphic and powerful one-syllable words is almost without parallel," and he continues to exhibit this ability in new songs every day. Neither is the railroad man a peasant, nor the Kentucky mountaineer, nor the soft-coal miner, nor the shanty-boy at sea, nor the college undergraduate, nor the child in the street; yet each one of these persons is familiar with many snatches of unremembered origin and is capable of repeating them when appropriately surrounded by his peers. America has no peasant class. But Americans grow up on songs which, whatever they think of them in critical or self-conscious moments, are perhaps the nearest of all living things to their uninstructed hearts.

Mr. Lomax and his son would be the first to admit that their collection is not the final one. Nor is it, as they point out, perfectly representative, since Indian poetry, the Spanish traditional ballads of the Southwest, and the English ballads of the southern Appalachians are given no place. The final collection, when and if it can be made, will fill ten times as many volumes as Child found it necessary to publish; and there is no possibility at present of a selection which would be satisfactory to everybody. The Lomaxes have wisely considered the needs of the numbers of characters are set before the reader, and their lives offering new variants of established songs, adding explanatory and bibliographical information when that is desirable, and in at least one field turning up new ground. This is the field of the Negro work song, which to be sure has been gone over very competently by Odum and Johnson. But the Negro worker is so far from having ceased to be creative that there is still much to do, and what the Lomaxes did was to spend several months of the summer of 1933 listening to segregated gangs in the prison camps of Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Tennessee. They brought back the words and music of songs sung by men with such names as Iron Head, Clear Rock, Chin Shooter, Lead Belly, Black Samson, Can't Make It, Butter Ball, Ing Shing, Scrap Iron, Tight Eyes, Double Head, Bull Face, Log Wagon, Creepin' Jesus, Long Distance, Burn Down, Steam Shovel, Black Rider, Barrel House, and Spark Plug; and by two women called Dink and Bat. This is their contribution in the present volume, though inasmuch as the whole volume achieves great excellence as an anthology, there is every reason to call it a contribution in itself, as Carl Sandburg's "American Songbag" was, and as innumerable special collections have been, from Cecil Sharp and Krehbiel on to day before yesterday.

The fact that the Lomaxes sometimes fail to provide an air to be sung with their words, though their customary procedure is to print the simple melody which their phonographs or their transcribers recorded, makes it easy to agree with them when they say that in general with American folk song the music is more important than the words. The words, indeed, seem to be of no importance at all; they are scarcely poetry, and they are seldom sense. The combination, however, is always a folk song. There can be no doubt as to that, or as to our lack, don't you know, of a peasantry.

MARK VAN DOREN

A Technician of Mediocrity

The Executioner Waits. By Josephine Herbst. Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.50.

"THE EXECUTIONER WAITS" is a solidly constructed novel-machine. Each part functions for the whole, each character is fitted into the total effect, there is hardly a paragraph that exists for its own sake. A great number of characters are set before the reader, and their lives are recounted in such a way as to fit them into the economic history of the times. No character can escape Miss Herbst's purpose or get her to relax her remorseless science. The result is a book that is difficult to read and that, after it has been read, it is impossible not to admire for its clarity and organization.

The problem Miss Herbst has undertaken is to describe the effect of the economic class antagonisms of the contemporary world on the lives of a middle-class family. The Trexler family is made up of limbs that are economically sound, of some that are economically frail, but all of them are emotionally rotten. It branches out with sons, daughters, sons-in-law, daughters-in-law across the America of our time. It speaks the American language. (Miss Herbst has a superb ear for the way Americans actually talk and a style that is able to convey it.) But the Trexler family and practically everyone else in "The Execu-

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tioner Waits" are as inhuman as the parts of a machine. They have hardly any emotions that are not mechanically caused by economic problems or social conventions; they have no fancies, humors, caprices; they are dead and gestureless; except that practical problems attack them, they would not stir.

"Mrs. Chance kept a sharp eye on her son. . . . Her son was living with a woman. Her skin from neck to feet seemed flooded with red at the idea. . . . The visions that came to her thick and fast tormented her. She took soda for heartburn." "Abel Chance did not worry about his soul. As a deacon of the church his soul was taken care of. He loved the Sunday ritual of waffles for breakfast with the Sunday paper crisp and unopened waiting for him in the living-room. He did not believe in reading the paper at the table on Sunday. He was always shaved and bathed before Sunday breakfast and sat in his lounging jacket with the consciousness of clean underwear, the finest woolen socks, and pure linen helping him to savor the special Sunday quality of the day." Mr. Chance, who "would as soon think of not winding his watch as not going to church," his wife who takes soda for heartburn when she discovers that her son is living with a woman—these clumsy marionettes are to Miss Herbst not especially mechanized creatures, but typical representatives of the American middle class. The Wendels and the Trexlers are as the Chances. Without irony, indignation, or pity, with a cold exactitude, Miss Herbst reports their reflex angers, habitual fears, illimitable dulness.

Such mediocrity is inhuman. Miss Herbst has overplayed her propagandist's hand. A people such as she describes is not worth saving. Moreover, one feels that Miss Herbst *requires* her characters to be dull-witted, feelingless, and dead. For she describes them only in terms of their habits. As a great word has it, we are only heroes momentarily. Moments of wonder and doubt even the most automatic of us must experience at some time or other. Not so Miss Herbst's characters. The social purport of "The Executioner Waits"—analysis of the economic pressure on the American middle classes—requires of course a disclosure of what is habitual in the middle-class reaction to economic stress. But one can describe any class in terms of its automatisms. True enough, Miss Herbst manages to pump a little enthusiasm and life into those of her characters who find themselves on the side of the workers. But it is not easy for her to handle a living and inventive organism. Her very Gertrude Steinish style is particularly inappropriate to such a task, although it is beautifully adapted to the mechanics of emotion. Miss Herbst's workers, wobblies, and farmers are much vaguer than her money-, property-, and convention-bent bourgeoisie. The fact is that Miss Herbst is more adept at dealing with the dead than with the living, with the fancyless than with the fanciful, with automatic, expressionless actions than with creative and human sentiments. Miss Herbst is most at home artistically with the ugly. If this were not the case it would be impossible for her to deal so scientifically with these terribly banal lumps of calculating clay. The fact that Miss Herbst writes without warmth or scorn, that she does not even have any hatred for her characters, proves, it seems to me, that there is a subtle affinity between her talents as a writer and their lack of talent as human beings. To put it frankly, it occurs to me that Miss Herbst's writing equipment necessitates a talentless humanity such as she describes.

But once we suspect that Miss Herbst has something to gain as a writer by the defects of the people she writes about, it becomes difficult to have faith in her vision. The question arises: In a society of supermen and superwomen would not Miss Herbst find novel-writing too adventuresome an art? In, let us say, a classless society in which men and women are free and creative, in which the élan of their lives would correspond only to a rhapsodic, laughter-loving style in art, would not Miss Herbst find reality not dull enough for her talents? A harsh

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judgment. But I find even a trace of satisfaction in Miss Herbst's portrait of the middle class. Her extremely exact renderings of family conflicts end often enough on a note of complacent half-delight in the vulgarity that has been exposed. Thus I do not find revolutionary longing in any single character that is in any way convincing. The ignoble, the mercenary, and the mean are so powerful in these pages, and Miss Herbst is so unfrightened, unhurried, calm—and slightly satisfied in her vision—that the total effect of the novel is, artistically, a call to disgusted impotence, even though the ideological purport of the book is the necessity for revolution. Few can be inspired to action by a machine's slightly satisfied judgment of machines.

LIONEL ABEL

Sonnets of a Mountaineer

Man with a Bull-Tongue Plow. By Jesse Stuart. E. P. Dutton and Company. $3.

JESSE STUART, of Kentucky mountaineer farmer folk, writes because he can't help it. Scotch on his father's side, Indian and English on his mother's, he farmed, worked in the American Rolling Mills and hated them, then went to college in Tennessee. He's back on his farm now, feeling and thinking in poetry. As Mark Van Doren says (on the jacket), you can read his book as autobiography, and he is most amusing taken in this fashion. But if, as Mr. Van Doren also says, he is to be considered as a modern American Burns, then we had better define our terms. Perhaps Mr. Stuart is the only kind of a Burns we, in this country, can grow. We have no true folk background, no folk song save a sectional folk song. And Jesse Stuart makes almost no use of the Kentucky mountaineer folk background. When he quotes, or almost quotes, or adapts, he is using A. E. Housman or some other poet whom he remembers from his college days, when, obviously, he got the usual smattering of poetry and remembered it. Probably he learned, too, what a sonnet looks like. At all events he writes in the sonnet form or in a form at least vaguely resembling the sonnet. He must have run across and been much taken with Edgar Lee Masters, for this book reminds one continuously of Spoon River. Here are all the village people in their graves. Some, to be sure, are out of their graves and talking about those who are in. Much of the talk, even in sonnet form, is racy and very colloquial.

Now and then, however, the poet turns literary. He has a way of starting off with a literary line, and then, after chewing his pencil, setting down exactly how he arrived at the sensation stated in the literary line.

> This is the night for song; the windows shake.
> I guess it is the wind that shakes the windows.

The book as a whole is very entertaining—a cross between a kind of folk exuberance and that thing called poetry.

Stuart is like Burns in this at least that he seems to have loved a great many girls and all of them because they were young, sweet, and pretty; because, like the land, they indicated a fragrant spring. He wants to live with all of them and he wants to lie in the grave with all of them. He loves the soil, too, and good honest work, and freedom. He detests city jobs, conventional education, and the business of holding down petty political positions. The good clean life is, for him, the farmer's life. He knows his townspeople and his farm hands, and he writes tenderly, humorously, and full-bloodedly of them. He is not really a poet at all, in the usual sense of the word; he is not the lyric singer Burns was. But he feels and lives as Burns might have felt and lived, in America, and here sets it down.

EDA LOU WALTON

Shorter Notices

The Manuscript of Shakespeare's "Hamlet" and the Problems of Its Transmission. An Essay in Critical Bibliography. By J. Dover Wilson. The Macmillan Company. Two Volumes. $4.50.

Mr. Wilson's remarkable work is the first of three which he will devote to "Hamlet." The second is an edition of the play for "The New Shakespeare" (already in press) and the third is a discussion of it as a dramatic masterpiece. The present treatise is in effect a bibliographical introduction to the edition Mr. Wilson is preparing, the problems involved being so numerous and interesting that instead of the customary ten or twenty pages two volumes were found necessary. Mr. Wilson, who is one of the half-dozen leading Shakespearean scholars throughout the world, belongs to the somewhat fanatical school of British bibliographers headed by Pollard, Greg, and McKerrow. He is fanatical, that is to say, because he is so emphatic about the difficulties of establishing Shakespeare's text and because he is so sure that he knows how to solve them. When this emphasis is discounted, the present textual analysis remains altogether fascinating and almost altogether convincing, and is by any account one of the most amazing productions of a modern pen. With all the resources of the new bibliography at his command Mr. Wilson proceeds to consider which portions of the Quarto of 1603, the Quarto of 1605, and the Folio of 1623 come nearest to representing Shakespeare's intention with respect to "Hamlet." Without going into his arguments, which are as interminable as they are brilliant, his conclusions may be stated briefly. The Quarto of 1605 was set up by an ignorant printer from the poet's manuscript. The Folio text was a playhouse prompter's copy considerably and often stupidly revised. The Quarto text of 1603 was carelessly taken down in the playhouse or imperfectly remembered from it, and hence is of value now and then as showing what a spectator heard. But the best text is that of 1605, and Mr. Wilson will favor it in his forthcoming edition, which should be historic.

An Introduction to Pareto. By George C. Homans and Charles P. Curtis, Jr. Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.

This introduction to Pareto, whose "Sociologie Générale" is scheduled to appear shortly in English translation, aims to make the study of Pareto easier. The authors avow as their dearest hope for their book "that it will be found interesting enough to be at once discarded in favor of Pareto." Judged by the purpose the authors set for themselves, the book must be declared quite inadequate. In the absence of any attempt to motivate attention by posing the problems of sociology in their most concrete forms, the lay reader will find the book too technical, and discard not only it but Pareto as well. The informed student of sociology will be irritated by the amateurish treatment of the problems of scientific methodology, which the authors discuss at length on the basis of an uncritical reading of popular works by eminent scientific figures. The treatment of the fundamental problems of social causation, classification, and experimental and non-experimental actions is discursive and not analytical. No critical examination of Pareto's assumptions is offered, and the large claims advanced for the revolutionary importance of his work are not substantiated. The authors seem to be unaware that, terminology aside, most of Pareto's leading concepts can be found in earlier works of formal sociologists of both the French and German schools. The book's chief merit is the fresh illustrative material it contains, drawn from various modern sources, of Pareto's classification of residues and derivations.

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Drama

Star Finds Love

"PERSONAL APPEARANCE" (Henry Miller's Theater) is no bid for the Pulitzer prize even if it does deal with certain aspects of the American scene. I take it that neither the author nor the producer had any thought of elevating the stage, and I doubt if either was much concerned with literary values. On the contrary their methods are rough and ready, and between them they have concocted an entertainment more than a little amusing in its rough and ready way, with more laughs of the sort which originate below the neck than very many comedies can boast.

Carole Arden is a movie star on a tour of personal appearances in the company of a general manager whose chief duty is to prevent her from Finding Love too often or too publicly. She is, as she does not hesitate to explain, devoted to "my-husband-Benjamin-Feinberg-president-of-Superfine-Pictures-Incorporated." But she was, after all, only a child who had never been married but twice when he carried her off to glory, and her life is not easy for one who is simple at heart and who longs for nothing so much as a quiet existence with hollyhocks and a strong, simple man. What is more natural than that she should dream of happiness with the handsome proprietor of a filling station before whose establishment her car breaks down, and what is more natural than that, when she discovers his interest in the technical methods of movie-making, she should propose that he accompany her at once back to Hollywood and Mr. Feinberg? Does she not know from her own experience how futile it is to write letters? Does she not owe her own success to "personal contacts" (of a nature not too clearly specified) with the great of moviedom? My readers, I hope, get the idea, and it is not necessary to explain in detail just how the general manager persuades the star to make the same supreme sacrifice which she made in her last picture, "Drifting Lady," when she surrendered the only man she had ever really loved to the innocent girl who had been waiting for him. But the manager's methods are ingenious and bring the curtain down on the most hilarious recent variant of the profane tag line.

In form and style "Personal Appearance" is a bit mongrel. One of its ancestors is plainly the Kaufman-Hart opus "Once in a Lifetime," and there is also an unmistakable family resemblance to the many reckless farces which culminated in "She Loves Me Not." Less fortunate is a strain which seems to have come down through the long line of innocent bucolic comedies from which the late Winchell Smith made a fortune, and, indeed, the only really dull moments of the evening are those in which the influence of "The Fortune Hunter" or "Turn to the Right" rears its pretty head. The incongruity is not, however, serious, and any insidious sentiment is quickly dispelled by one of the first-rate wisecracks with which the evening abounds. Gladys George is very good indeed as the susceptible siren, and my guess is that the audience will be swelled by whatever Hollywood visitors happen to be in town during the run. What is more they will probably know enough to laugh louder than anyone else whether they feel like it or not.

"Lost Horizons" (St. James Theater) has all the solemn aspirations which "Personal Appearance" leaves to others, but it is not, unfortunately, anything like as successful. Its heroine is a suicide compelled to learn in the beyond how the life she cut off would have benefited others whom she does not even know, and the idea is one which most persons would be willing, offhand, to accept as "interesting." Like most ideas which can be made to seem interesting in a sentence, its possibilities are,

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however, exhausted as soon as it has been stated, and the more it is elaborated, the duller it becomes. Jane Wyatt as the heroine is as beautiful and charming as usual but there is not much that she can do.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

Films

Pure Cinema

FOR more than thirty years the little group of islands off the west coast of Ireland to which the Celts gave the name Aran (because the shape of the largest of them resembles a kidney) has attracted writers, artists, and archaeologists from all over the world. Here, in 1898, came the Anglo-Irish littérateur, John Millington Synge, in search of a more wholesome creative environment than he was finding in the small hotel bedrooms of left-bank Paris. The results in "Riders to the Sea" and "The Playboy of the Western World" were to become, as everyone knows, among the most influential pieces in the modern theater—although neither of these plays, if the truth were realized, was quite authentic in the impression which it gave of the life and spirit of the islands. Liam O'Flaherty, the only native of Aran ever to enlist in the British army, according to the local scandal, has returned there for the background both of his best novel, "The Black Soul," and of his worst, "The Martyr." Archaeologists from France, Germany, and Belgium have come to speculate on the mystery of the huge, precipice-like Dun Aengus, which may have been either a fortress or a very early outdoor temple, and which is certainly one of the oldest antiquities in the British Isles. It was inevitable that sooner or later an enterprising film director like Robert Flaherty should set up his camera in these islands and give us a photographic rendering of their very special quality of remoteness and beauty.

To anyone visiting the Aran Islands without a particular professional object in mind, their attraction is something complex and imponderable. It is not only the pinched beauty of their physical appearance—the precise network of minute green fields, the granite meadows the color of the sea, the hard-bitten contours of the coastline. It is not only the revelation of an economics so primitive that the very soil itself must be created by the hand of man—out of ground stone and seaweed laid along the barren slopes and ledges. Nor is it altogether the sense of a historical continuity such as one receives nowhere else in Europe—of a race which has been living in the same place and speaking the same language for more than two thousand years. All these impressions and feelings combine in the realization that here, on the fringe of modern industrial Europe, is a kind of little oasis in which both nature and man have managed to preserve an aristocratic indifference to the unruly passage of time.

Flaherty's "Man of Aran" (Criterion) is photographically one of the most beautiful pictures that have ever been made. In the greater purity of its lyricism it is superior to "Nanook of the North"; and in its avoidance of thesis and over-scored plot it surpasses the film that Flaherty made with the late F. W. Murnau in the South Seas. The pictorial values of the background are realized fully and without resort either to sentimentalization or pretentious stylization. It is doubtful if any more successful photography of the sea and sea-forms—waves, foam, storms—has ever been managed. The sea is not only a background, a centralizing image, but a symbol; and the symbol is indistinguishable from the subject and the theme. By the juxtaposition of this image with another image, that of man himself, an almost abstract symbol of resistance moving erect between stone and water, Flaherty secures all the story or "plot" that is necessary. The consequence of this abstract simplification of theme is to give the picture an absolute aesthetic beauty such as is rarely achieved on the screen. But it also involves eliminations which make it, as a picture about the Aran Islands, in many respects incomplete and disappointing. Aside from any number of missed opportunities in the everyday social and economic life of the place and the total absence of any historical sense, it fails to indicate anything essential or unique in the character of the people. It is probable that Flaherty could have treated his theme equally well along the coast of Brittany or Maine. What "Man of Aran" actually represents in Flaherty's career, as a matter of fact, is a departure from the documentary film with which his name is usually associated to the type of abstract or "pure" cinema. As an example of this type it is a triumph, and the objection that it does not possess certain features of the other is hardly justified. It is likely to be, in any case, the most satisfactory film of any type that we shall see this season.

WILLIAM TROY

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